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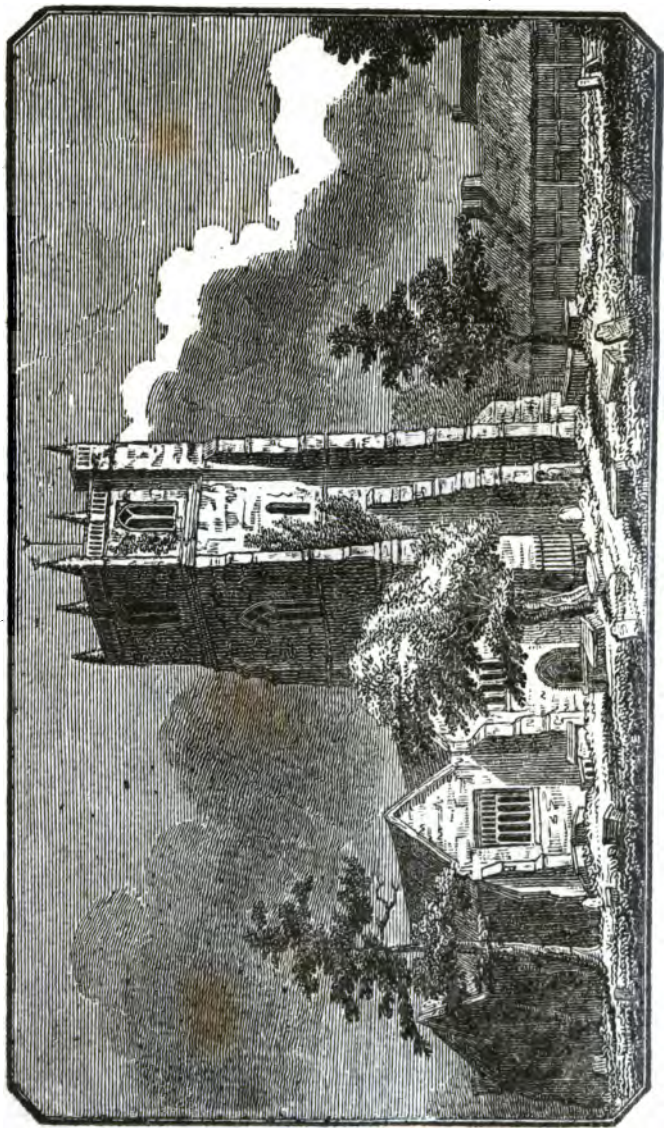








North-west View of the Church of Oswestry.





THE
HISTORY
OF

Oswestry,

From the earliest Period ;

ITS

ANTIQUITIES & CUSTOMS :

With a short Account of

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

*Collected from various Authors, with
much original Information.*

EMBELLISHED WITH ENGRAVINGS.

OSWESTRY :

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TO

THE HONOURABLE THOMAS KENYON,

MAYOR OF OSWESTRY,

AS CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF THIS

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ADDRESS AND ETYMOLOGY.



IN taking a retrospective view of the Borders of England and Wales, which were in ancient times termed *the marches, debatable lands, hunting grounds*, and perhaps designated by other appellations, arising from the circumstances and the tempers of different periods, it is with very peculiar satisfaction that the mind contemplates the internal strength, which this island derived from the connection that, in an early age, bound this kingdom and the principality of Wales in one political ligature. Antecedent to the reign of Edward I. the part of England that is the subject of present consideration, and which is more immediately on the border of Wales, was termed the Northern Marches; governed like those of Scotland, by a Lord Warden, who was here, however, more generally termed Lord President; who kept his court at Ludlow Castle; and who, down to the reign of Charles II. lived in a state little inferior to royalty. Though national contention had long since ceased,

this officer was still considered as absolutely necessary to quell petty disturbances, and to adjust differences, such as frequently occurred from the irritability of the tempers of

A people similar

As twins are to each other; valiant both:

Both for their valour famous through the world;

and which generally burst forth in consequence of quarrels that arose at hunting or drinking parties, &c.

“ When many a knyght and baron bold,

Renown'd for hardie deeds;

Whose names Fame's ample list enroll'd,

Oppos'd ther stedes to stedes.”

As the ancient town of Oswestry and the adjacent country was, in common with other parts of the borders, the scene of many of those exploits, it is deemed necessary to allude to them previous to our entering on the main subject of the work.

Numerous conjectures are sometimes formed respecting the derivation of names, but the orthography of our forefathers is so uncommonly imperfect, that after the strictest enquiry; we are left only in a state of uncertainty.

Oswestry was called by the Britons *Tre'r-cadeiriau*; literally, *the town of chairs*, or *seats commanding an extensive view*, (as *Cadair Idris*, *the chair of Idris*, and others) as there are several eminences commanding such views in the neighbourhood.

We find that Oswael, one of the sons of Cunedda Wledig*, as a reward for his services in driving the Irish from Gwynedd, in conjunction with his brothers, obtained that district called *Osweling*, where the present town of Oswestry is situated. The town may ascribe its foundation and name to this Oswael; who, it is said, erected a place of religious worship therein.

The Saxons called this place *Maserfield*, derived from *maes hir*, (brit.) the long field; and *felle*, (sax.) fierce, cruel, outrageous; in allusion to the battle between Penda, king of Mercia, and Oswald, king of Northumberland; or more probably *feldt*, a field,

* Cunedda was the son of Edeyrn ab Padarn with the Crimson Coat, by Gwawl, daughter of Coel Godebog. His original patrimony was in Cumberland and some neighbouring districts, where he began to reign about A. D. 328, and died in 389. Cunedda had many children; some of whom inherited lands in Wales, in right of Gwawl his mother, and for assisting in driving the Irish away; but the greatest number of them, and indeed most of their descendants, embraced a religious life, on account of being driven from their possessions by the Saxons. Hence, they were ranked with the children of Bran and Brychan, under the appellation of the three holy families of Britain. The Triads record Cunedda as the first who granted lands and privileges to the church in this island. His sons who obtained inheritance in Wales, were the following: Tibion, his eldest son, dying in the Isle of Man; Meirion, the son of Tibion, had Cantrev Meirion; Arwystil had Arwystli; Caredig had Caredgion; Dunod had Dunodig; Edeyrn had Edeyrnion; Mael had Dinmael; Coel had Coeileion; Dogvael had Dogveilin; Rhuvon had Rhuvoniog; Einion had Caer Einion; and Oswael had Osweling. *Owen's Camb. Biog.*

added by the Saxons, they looking on *Maes hir* merely as an epithet, without knowing its signification. It is conjectured, that the Welsh called it *Croes-oswallt*, and the English *Oswald's-tree*, from a circumstance which is thus related: Oswald, previous to the battle with Cadwallon, near Severus's Wall, set up a cross of wood, and making intercession thereat, he overthrew his adversary. In those dawning days of Christianity, the success of Oswald was attributed to this pious act. Being fortunate in this instance, he, probably, adopted the like measure before Oswestry; "but as the sunne hath his shadow, and the highest tide her ebbe, so Oswald how holy soever, or government how good," fell in the contest. From the cross or tree he had erected, the town took its name.

The town was also termed *Blanc-minster*, *White-minster*, and in ancient records, *Candida-ecclesia*, and *Album-monasterium*, from its "fair and white monastery." During the time when Meredydd ab Bleddyn inherited Oswestry, the inhabitants called it *Trefred*, a contraction of Tre Meredith, Meredith's Town. This prince dying in 1129, the name was lost, and the town resumed its former appellation.



HISTORIC NOTICES, &c.

OSWESTRY, as before observed, is supposed to have been founded by Oswael, about the end of the fourth century. It formed part of Powisland; which when entire, reached in a straight line from Broxton Hills, in Cheshire, southerly to Pengwern Powis, or Shrewsbury, including a large tract in both these counties; from thence through the eastern limits of Montgomeryshire, comprehending all that county, part of Radnorshire and Brecknockshire; then turning northward, included the Cwmmwds of Mowddwy, Edeyrnion, and Glyndyfrdwy, Merionethshire, and (circuiting part of Denbighshire) came along part of Elwydian Hills, to the summit of Moel-famma, including all Denbighshire, except those parts which at present constitute the lordships of Denbigh and Ruthin; from hence, taking a south-easterly direction to Broxton Hills, asserts its right to Molesdale, Hope-dale, and Maelor, in Flintshire. It was, perhaps, of much greater extent under the reign of Brochwel

Ysgythrog, who was defeated by the Saxons at the battle of Chester, in 607. After this event, the borders became a scene of rapine; the Welsh and Mercians alternately making the most terrible inroads into each other's dominions.

August 5th, 642, the contending armies of Oswald, king of Northumberland, and Penda, king of Mercia, met here: Oswald approached with his army to what is called Maes-y-llan, or Churchfield, then open. About four hundred yards west of the church is a rising ground: here the battle began. The assailant appears to have driven Penda's forces to a field nearer the town called Cae Nef*. Here Oswald fell. Penda, with a savage barbarity caused the breathless body of Oswald to be cut to pieces, and stuck on poles, as so many trophies of his victory†. This gave occasion to these lines of a christian poet of some antiquity:

“ Whose head, all black with gore, and mangled hands,
Were fix'd on stakes, at Penda's curs'd commands;

* Cae Nef is situated on the left of the turnpike road leading to the free-school: it signifies Heaven-field. The Hefenfeld in Northumberland is said to have received its name on account of Oswald attributing the victory over the Britons solely to the interposition of Heaven.

† In a MS. account of the town, written in 1685, there is the following observation: “ There was an old oake lately standing in Meaburie, within the parish of Oswestry, whereon one of king Oswald's arms hung, say the neighbours, by tradition.” *Harl. MSS. Brit. M. 1981.*

“ To stand a sad example to the rest,
And prove him wretched, who is ever blest.
Vain hope were both ! for Oswy’s happier care
Stopp’d the proud victor, and renew’d the war :
Nor him, mankind will ever wretched own,
Who wears a peaceful and eternal crown.”

Oswald and Oswy were sons of Ethelfrid the Wild, king of Northumberland. Redwald, king of East Anglia, having defeated and slain their father, in 617, Oswald and Oswy were taken into Scotland, where they continued during the reigns of Edwin and Osric. After the latter were defeated and slain by Penda and Cadwallon, Oswald and Oswy returned from Scotland, in 634, where they had been baptized in the Christian religion, according to the Church of Rome. Oswald having united the kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia, (Northumberland) and promoted this religion there, prepared to meet Cadwallon, the Briton, who had attacked his dominions. Over this prince he gained a decisive victory. Encouraged thus far, he wished to curb his restless and ambitious neighbour, Penda. Therefore, marching with his victorious followers, he gave Penda battle near this town ; the event of which is before detailed.

Oswald’s strict virtue, great humility, and zeal for the advancement of the religion he had embraced, gained him the love and esteem of his subjects. He had been a great benefactor to various monasteries, and his character was so much revered by the monks,

that a short time after his death, he was canonized; and the field in which he was slain, became celebrated for the numerous miracles that were believed to have been wrought in it. His relics, which Oswy removed the year following, were said to be of service in all diseases to which man or beast are subjected; and the spot where his body had lain, to have proved its efficacy in a remarkable manner: a traveller's horse, wearied by excessive labour, stopped, lay down, and, throwing about in great pain, fortunately rolled on the place where Oswald fell. Immediately the animal was relieved, and sprung from the ground. His master, sagacious man! noted the spot; and seated on his renovated horse, shortly arrived at his inn. A female was there sick of the palsy. To her he related the account of his horse; advised her relatives to repair to the hallowed spot; she was no sooner conveyed there, than her disorder instantly abated. As several of these *wonderful* tales occupy the pages of our ancient authors, the above is given as a specimen; to which, the reader is to give what credit he pleases.

Oswald's Well is situated a little to the west of the free-school, and is supplied by a spring flowing from the elevated ground above it. The well is a small square basin, in a recess formed by a stone wall, and arched over. On the back is a rudely-sculptured head of king Oswald; and the front was

secured by an iron grate. A second recess of the same kind is divided from the former, by a slight stone wall; and in this recess, there is water also, which was, perhaps, granted for common uses, whilst the other may have been held sacred. There was formerly a chapel or cell near it, but no vestige of either remains; and the well itself is in a very ruinous state, but the water is good. There is a



tradition, that when Oswald was slain, an eagle tore one of the arms from the body, and flying off with it, fell down and perished upon this spot, from whence the water flushed up, and has continued to flow ever since, as a memorial of the event.

On the place of martyrdom, as the monks have termed it, a Monastery was founded, dedicated to St. Oswald; but there are no evidences at present extant of the time either of its foundation or dissolution. In the reign of Henry VIII. no part of the building was left; for Leland, who then visited this place, says, that the cloister only was standing within the memory of persons then living. The authority of Leland lays aside all doubts of the existence of a monastery here; and Gutto o'r Glynn, a Welsh poet, who flourished in the middle of the fifteenth century, notices it in the following description of Oswestry: "It (Oswestry) is the liberal, the best endowed of cities; the beloved of heaven that draws me to it. Oswestry, the strong fort of conquerors; the London of Powis; where the houses are well stored with wine, and the land is rich. Its Free-school is celebrated, and it is a city for the preachers, and for men of science. God is present in its beautiful temple—a church adorned with rich chalices, and well-toned organ and bells. There is no better choir (none in which the correctness of singing is greater, or the habiliments more suitable) from it to Canterbury: nor do I know of any *Convent for Monks* superior to the *White Minster**. The hand-

* The first rude ecclesiastical structures in this country were of wood. "In those days," says venerable Bede, "we had wooden churches and golden priests." The contrast between the timber

somest women, and the most becomingly drest, are those of Oswestry. In merchandise, it resembles Cheapside; and its people are honest and unanimous. The grace of God be with the city, and those who dwell therein; and may God be its guardian and preserver."

From the above it appears, that the White Monastery was in or near the town itself. In another poem he says, "it was on the *south-side* of the town;" which is the situation of the present church, with respect to the ancient walls of the town. There is, also, a spot of ground near the church, still called *Erw Myneich*, that is, Monk's Acre; and, as the ancient name of the church was *Blanc-minster*, there can be little doubt but that the monastery was adjoining to the church. Some traces of the foundations are still discoverable, in digging graves in the churchyard. A celebrated writer* is inclined to think it to have been collegiate; a kind of establishment very frequent in places of martyrdom or of assassination, reverential or expiatory, according to the nature of the event.

buildings grown black and dingy with age, and the gay and lightsome aspect of new edifices of white and polished free-stone, procured for these last the significant appellation of *White Minsters*, *White Churches*, &c. Such is the ingenious and elegant conjecture of Dr. Whitaker.—*Rev. H. Owen's Account of Shrewsbury.*

* Pennant.

Gutto o'r Glynn, or Griffith of Glynn, seems to have been a native of Glynn Ceiriog; and, in consequence of the poem, from which the above is extracted, to have been made a burgess of the corporation of Oswestry.

In the Reign of Henry II. Reyner, bishop of St. Asaph, resided often at, or near Oswestry. He became a good benefactor to the abbey of Shrewsbury, by bestowing upon it all the tithe hay and corn of "Blanch Monastery" and its chapels, which were formerly applied to maintain twelve secular priests, who, for the most part, had their regular wives, for the Welsh clergy long resisted the injunction of the Romish church in the article of celibacy, as well as several others. By the pope's authority Reyner expelled those seculars. To return from this digression :

Until the year 777; Oswestry was possessed by the Britons; when the warlike king Offa passing the Severn with a mighty force, expelled them from their fruitful seats on the plains, and reduced the kingdom of Powis to the western side of the celebrated ditch*

* This ditch called Clawdd Offa, extended from the river Wye along the counties of Hereford and Radnor, in Montgomeryshire; from Pwll y piod, an alehouse on the road between Bishop's-castle and Newtown; thence it passes northward near Mellington-hall, near which, is an encampment called Caer-din, by Brompton-mill, where there is a mount; Limor-park, near Montgomery, Forden-heath, Nanteribba, at the foot of an ancient fortress, Leighton-hall, and Buttington church. Here it is lost for five miles; the channel of the

still known by his name. The princes of Powis

Severn probably serving for that space as a continuation of the boundary. Just below the conflux of the Bele and the Severn, it appears again, and passes by the churches of Llandysilio and Llanymynech, to the edge of the vast precipitous limestone rock. From this place it runs by Tref y clawdd, over the horse-course on Cefn y bwch, above Oswestry, then above Sellatyn; whence it descends to the Ceiriog, and then to Glynn, where there is a large breach, supposed to be the place of interment of the English who fell in the battle of Crogen, to be noticed hereafter. It then goes by Chirk-castle, and below Cefn y wern, crosses the Dee and the Ruabon road near Plas Madoc, forms part of the turnpike road to Wrexham, to Pentrebychan, where there is a mount; then by Plas power to Adwy'r clawdd, near Minera; by Brymbo, crosses the Cegidog river, and through a little valley upon the south side of Bryniorkyn mountain, to Coed talwrn, and Cae-dwn, a farm near Treuddin chapel, in the parish of Mold, (pointing towards the Clwydian hills) beyond which, there can no farther traces be discovered. It seems probable, that Offa imagined that the Clwydian hills, and the deep valley that lies at their base, would serve as a continuance of this prohibitory line: he had carried his arms over most part of Flintshire, and vainly imagined that his labours would restrain the Cambrian inroads in one part, and his orders prevent any incursions beyond these natural limits, which he had decreed to be the boundaries of his new conquests. It is observable, says Pennant, that in all parts the ditch is on the Welsh side; and that there are numbers of small artificial mounts, the sites of small forts along its course. These were garrisoned, and seem intended for the same purpose as the towers in the famous Chinese wall, to watch the motions of their neighbours, and to repel hostile incursions. The folly of this great work appeared on the death of Offa: the Welsh, with irresistible fury, despised his toils, and carried their ravages far and wide on the English marches. Superior force often repelled them. Sanguinary laws were made by the victorious Harold against any that should transgress the limits prescribed by Offa. The Welshman that was found in arms on the Saxon side of the ditch, was to lose his right hand.

were then constrained to quit their ancient residence at Pengwern, or Shrewsbury, and remove it to one not less fertile, to Mathrafel, in the beautiful vale of Myfod. From this period, their kingdom was called indifferently that of Powis, or of Mathrafel. The plains of Shropshire became a confirmed part of the Mercian kingdom; and the parts beyond the Severn of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, and the county of Hereford submitted to the yoke. The Britons still alive to their injuries, privately formed a plan of revenge. They entered into an alliance with the kings of Sussex and Northumberland, and made a breach in the rampart during the night, passed the boundary, at early dawn attacked the camp of Offa, in an unprepared state, and put great numbers to the sword. The Mercian monarch narrowly escaped with a small remnant of his army. The tract which forms the country above Croes-owallt or Oswestry, and the two Maelors, (Gymraeg or the present Bromfield, and Saesnag or the present Flintshire Maelor) with many other Cwmmwds, relapsed to their natural masters. Such was its state till 843, the reign of Roderic the Great, prince of all Wales; who, in his mother's right, possessed North Wales; in that of his wife, South Wales; and by that of his grandmother, Nest, sister and heiress to Congen ab Cadell, king of Powis, he added Powisland to his dominions. He, according to the destructive custom of gavel-kind, divided his principality among his children. To

Anarawd he gave North Wales; to Cadell, South Wales; to Mervyn, Powisland. Each wore a Talaith or diadem of gold, beset with precious stones; whence they were stiled Y Tri Tywysog Taleithiog, or the three crowned princes. After the death of Mervyn, Cadell usurped the portion of his brother. His eldest son Hywel Dda, or the Good, in 940, again united all Wales into one government. He left four sons, who divided South Wales and Powis between them; while North Wales was assumed in 948, by Iago ab Idwal Voel, and Ieuav. Edgar made them pay tribute of wolves' heads, and in forty-five years those animals were greatly lessened. The confusion that ensued on account of this partition, prevents anything being said with certainty, until Bleddyn ab Cynvyn, who ruled Wales jointly with his brother, at the time of the Conquest, re-united the kingdoms of North Wales and Powis. The succession to the whole principality passed from his children; but Powisland devolved to his sons; which came at length entire to Meredydd, the eldest born, after the contentions and slaughter usual after such partitions. Oswestry was called Trefred, in honour of this prince. He made the division which finally destroyed the power of the once potent kingdom of Powis. To his eldest son, Madog, he gave the part which bore afterwards the name of Powis Vadog: to Gryffydd, the portion called Gwenwynwyn. Powis VADOG, which belongs more particularly to our history, consisted, according

to the division of the times, of five Cantrefs or hundred townships; and these were subdivided into fifteen Cwmmwds.

<i>Cantrefs.</i>	<i>Cwmmwds.</i>	<i>In what Shires.</i>
Y BAWN,	{ Dinmael, Edeyrnion, Glyndyfrdwy,	Denbighshire. Merionethshire. Ibid.
Y RHIW,	{ Yale, or Jal, Ystrad Alun, or Mold, Hope,	Denbighshire. Flintshire. Ibid.
UWCHNANT,	{ Merford, Maelor Gymraeg or Bromfield, Maelor Saesnag,	Flintshire. Denbighshire. Flintshire.
TREFRED,	{ Croes-vaen, and Tret y Waun, or Chirk, CROES-OSWALLT, or Oswestry,	{ Denbighshire. Shropshire.
RHAIADR,	{ Mochnant-is-Rhaiadr, Cyn- llaeth, &c. Nan-heudwy, Whittington,	{ Denbighshire. Shropshire.

Madog married Susanna, daughter of Gryffydd ab Conan, prince of North Wales, by whom he had two sons; Gryffydd Maelor, and Owen ab Madog. To the first, he gave the two Maclors, Yale, Hope-dale, Nan-heudwy, Mochnant-is-Rhaiadr, &c.: to Owen, the land of Mechain Is-coed; and, to his natural son, Owen Brogyntyn, a young man of great merit, Edeyrnion and Dinmael. Madog's chief residence was at Oswestry; where he built the Castle about 1149, according to the Welsh records. His second wife was Maud Verdon, an English woman of noble birth. He died at Winchester, and his body was honourably conveyed to Powis, and buried at

Myfod. His widow married William Fitzalan, lord of Clun; who, in right of his wife, obtained the town and castle of Oswestry. This William was a descendant of Alan who came in with the Conqueror, and first of the Fitzalans that was baron of Oswestry. Alan was the stock of the Fitzalans, earls of Arundel, a powerful race, that existed, with fewer checks than common to dignity, for about five hundred years; fifteen of whom, enjoyed the baronage of Oswestry, in addition to their other great estates. The title of baron of "Oswaldestre," is now held by the duke of Norfolk. His ancestor, Thomas, duke of Norfolk, married lady Mary, daughter of Henry, last earl of Arundel of the name of Fitzalan, 13th Eliz. when the lordship of Oswestry was conveyed to the duke. The Powis family afterwards became possessed of the manor, &c. in which it now continues.

The nation being divided in the reign of Stephen, concerning his right to the crown, many of the nobility rose in support of the empress Maud. William Fitzalan espoused the cause of the latter, and united his forces with the noblemen of that party. However he was at length obliged to fly, leaving his estates, &c. to the mercy of the exasperated king. True to his honour, he did not deviate from those principles, which he had, at the risk of his life and fortune, supported: and firmly adhering to the interest of the empress, until her son, Henry II. succeeded

to the throne, his integrity was gratefully rewarded; and his honours and estates, among which were the castles of Oswestry and Clun, restored to him.

In 1164, Henry II. after the fatal battle of Eulo, in Flintshire, determined once more to attempt the subjugation of Wales, and to revenge the ravages carried through the borders by its gallant prince, Owain Gwynedd. For that purpose, he assembled a vast army at Oswestry, where he encamped, and stopped a considerable time; till hearing that Owain and Cadwaladr with all the strength of North Wales, prince Rhys with South Wales, and all the power of Powis had met together, and pitched their tents at Corwen, he then marched from Oswestry to the banks of the Cciriog. Recollecting his misfortune in the forests of Eulo, he directed his advanced guard to clear the passage, by falling the trees, in order to secure himself from ambushment. The pikemen, and flower of his army, were posted to cover the workmen. The spirit of the Welsh soldiery grew indignant at this attempt; and, without the knowledge of their leaders, fell with irresistible fury on these troops. The conflict was obstinate and bloody, and numbers of brave men perished. In the end, the Welsh retired to Corwen. Henry reached the summit of the Berwyn; but was so distressed by dreadful rains, and by the activity and prudence of Owain, who cut him off from all supplies, that he was obliged

to return with great loss of men and equipage. He however wreaked his vengeance on the unfortunate hostages which the Welsh had sent to him some time before, by putting out their eyes! This contest is sometimes termed The Battle of Cowpen; but with more propriety that of Crogen: for it happened beneath Castell Crogen, the present Chirk castle.—The place is still called *Adwy'r Beddan*, or the *pass of the graves* of the men who were slain here.

Considerable privileges have been granted to the town by its lords. The first charter of Oswestry was given by William, earl of Arundel, in the reign of Henry II.; and, from its brevity, was called by the Welsh, *SIARTER CWTTA*, or the short charter. The following observations occur in it: “I have received in Protection* my Burgesses of Blanc-minster. Richard de Chambre was Constable of White-minster. Thomas de Rossall held Rossall of John Fitz Alan, in Chief, of one Knight's Feet† at White-minster.”

The aforesaid William in levying an aid for the marriage of the king's daughter, in 1165, certified his knight's fees to be in number thirty-five and a half;

* There are many charters of Protection. The gentleman who favoured us with the above translation, has one in his museum.

† A Knight's Fee is so much inheritance of land, as is sufficient to maintain a knight; which in the reign of Henry III. was £15, or two hundred acres of land.

whereof nineteen were *de Veteri feofmento*, and sixteen and a half *de novo*. He magnificently entertained Giraldus Cambrensis and the archbishop of Canterbury, in his castle of Oswestry, on their journey to incite the people to arm themselves for the intended Crusade. Giraldus seemed to think the entertainment savoured too much of luxury. In a scutage made in the reign of king John, the said earl was not to do ward at any place but Blanc-minster, for the knight's fees held by him; nor to furnish more than ten soldiers, horse or foot, in the county of Salop; or more than five out of it.

Early in the reign of John, Gwenwynwyn, lord of Powis, went to Shrewsbury, to meet the king's council. He was dishonourably made prisoner, and confined in the castle of that place, to deter the Welsh from ravaging the borders. Notwithstanding this treatment of their prince, they actually sent a child under seven years old, in 1212, as an hostage for their performance of a treaty just made; but owing to some infringement of the peace, on the part of the Welsh, the child was hanged in Shrewsbury, by one of the king's creatures.

In 1214 Llywelyn ab Gruffydd ab Madog, made his complaint to the archbishop of Canterbury, against the constable of Oswestry, for disturbing him in the third part of the ville of Ledrod, and compelling him to send two young noblemen to be put to death,

after an ignominious manner, in derogation of their birth and extraction; which disgrace their parents would not have undergone for three hundred pounds sterling!* He states, also, that the constable had twice imprisoned sixty of his men, when each man was compelled to pay ten shillings for his liberty: and that when the Welsh people came to Oswestry fair, the constable would seize their cattle, by driving them into his castle, and refuse to pay for the same.

1216. Lewis, the dauphin of France, being invited by the English barons against king John, landed in the isle of Thanet; and marching forward to London, he received homage of all the barons that were in actual war against the king. John removed to Hereford, in the marches of Wales. He sent to prince Llywelyn and Bruce, imploring their assistance, but they did not hearken to his proposals. In revenge, he caused twenty-eight hostages, children of eminent Welsh families, to be hanged at Shrewsbury. Radnor and Hay castles he destroyed; and Oswestry, which belonged to John Fitzalan, who had taken part with the barons, was burned to the ground.

After the death of that prince, John Fitzalan was reconciled to his successor, Henry III.; and in 1227, procured for his manor of Blanc-minster, the GRANT

* A remarkable estimate of the lives of two children. The extract is made from an account of Oswestry castle, in Phillips's Shrewsbury.

of a fair on the eve, the day, and the day after St. Andrew's feast. The bailiffs were also made clerks of the market, with privilege to imprison any person detected in forstalling; for which was paid twenty marks as a consideration. These persons sometimes abused their prerogative; and it cannot be surprising that the grievances which the Welsh complained of to Edward I. should chiefly arise from this town.

In the rebellion of the earl of Pembroke, against Henry III. in 1233, Oswestry again experienced the dreadful effects of revenge. The confederates taking advantage of the perpetual animosity subsisting between the Welsh and English, joined Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, a prince who long supported a character distinguished for enterprise and bravery; burned the town; plundered the inhabitants of the marches, and laid waste the country: then entering Shrewsbury, made great booty there; put a great number of the inhabitants to the sword, and burned a considerable part of the town.

At this period, the situation of the inhabitants on the borders, was truly distressing: they were continually subject to the depredations and incursions of hostile armies; and the wolves having increased in the desolate mountains of Wales, at times came down in herds, and miserably ravaged the country*.

* The report of Edgar having extirpated the race of wolves out of

In 1277, Edward I. made Shrewsbury the chief seat of government for several months, that he might be ready to receive the necessary aid from his courts, in the subjugation of Wales, an enterprise long meditated. He surrounded Oswestry with walls, that it might be less liable to plundering excursions, and as a key to his intended conquest. A murage or toll was imposed upon the county, (the burgesses of the town of Shrewsbury excepted) for six years, for the building of the same; in which period it is presumed they were completed. It appears they were about a mile in circumference, with an intrenchment on the outside, which could be filled with water from the numerous streams in the vicinity. The remains of this fortification are still visible; the site of which, will be traced in the plan of the town given in the work. "Several strong towers were erected on the walls," but not a vestige of either is to be seen at this time. There were also four gateways, the only inlets into the town. These gates, in latter days, became extremely inconvenient for the passage of carriages, &c. The Black-gate was taken down by consent of the earl of Powis, and pillars erected in

the principality was erroneous. A young Welshman, killed in the battle of Eulo, in 1157, was discovered eight days after, attended by his faithful dog, who remained by the corpse the whole time, without food, and defended it from the prey of birds and wolves. *Girald. Camb.* Also in 1281, rewards were offered to those who killed a certain number, and brought their heads to Shrewsbury.

lieu thereof. The corporation also entered into an agreement, in 1782, with the succeeding lord of the manor, for the demolition of the remaining three gates, and appropriating the materials thereof to the erecting of a prison within the town. This was carried into effect, and pillars also were substituted in their stead. The accustomed tolls due to the lord of the manor are demanded at these avenues; but the inhabitants of Treflach, Trefarclawdd, Bryn, Morton, Trefonnen, Llyncllys, Cricketh, Blodwell, Maesbury, Sweeney, Pentregaer, Cynynion, Llanforda, and Syllattin, called the *groat burgesses*, have, when required, been used to carry materials for repairing the gates and pavements under the same; in consideration of which, they immemorially have been, and now are, exempted from payment of toll. It is in contemplation to shake of this imposition, in consequence of the decisions of the judges of the courts of King's-bench and Exchequer, in favour of the abolition of tolls. "Tolls cannot be taken without a *good* consideration be alledged: the reason is, because it is to deprive the subject of his common right and inheritance to pass through the king's highway, which right of passage was before all prescription. Courts are exceeding careful and jealous of these claims of right to levy money upon the subject: these tolls began and were established by the power of great men." *2nd Wilson*, 296. The committee for the management of the Oswestry toll case gave the

above citation in one of their circulars; observing at the same time, that "as no consideration is given by the lord of the manor of Oswestry, for the tolls demanded by him, upon the authority of the above-cited case, such demand cannot be supported: and, as such demands are highly prejudicial to the interests of the town and country, they informed him that they were ready to meet him to try the merits of the question, in the proper place." That some renumeration was formerly given to the town, will appear by the following mild letter from one of its lords, addressed on the cover,

"To the Baylyffe of my Towne of Oswestrey, and the Muringers of the same:"

WHEREBY the sufferaunce of me and myne auncetors, gone, have of Longe tyme Receyved the threrd part of the Tole of the towne gayte of Oswestrey, to be, as I Sybpose, bestowed upon the amendement and reperacons of the towne walles, as ned requier; wch I am Informed, you convert to other purposes for yo^r owne privayt uses, and suffer the said wales to Rone into greatt Ruen and decaye: wherefore I will and requyre youe, to stay in yor hande all suche monye as is or shalbe Leaved upon that part of the tole sithens michallmas Last Paste, untile the next grett leete, To be holden At Oswestrey; and then to Bring before my steward the graunte whereby you claime the Same. And yf yt be there by founde that you have Altered the use in the Bestowinge of the saide monye, he is by me Apoynted to take ord^r wth youe for the bestoweinge thereof As yt was firste

meane: & wch yf youe fayle to do, or that my said steward shall, in Defaulte of youe, take no good ord^r therein, Then I will youe staye the Said monye in yor hande, tell suche tyme as I-----"*

Some account of the Town Gates, will again lead the reader into chronological order.

THE NEW-GATE

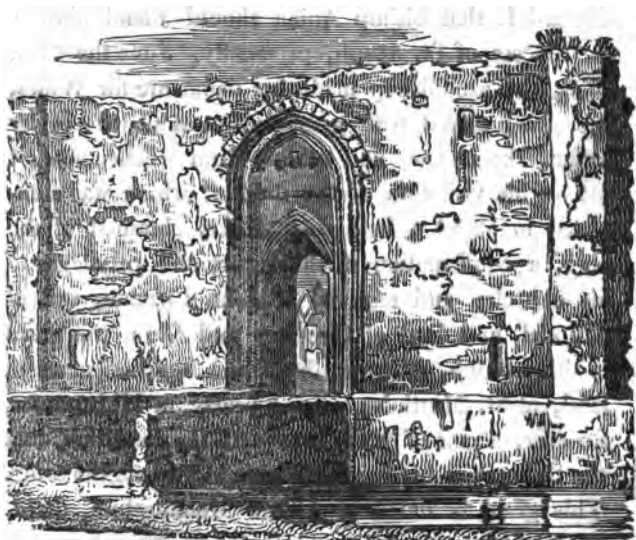


was built in the reign of Edward II. It was used as a prison and guard-room for soldiers. The horse

* The remainder of the original is lost; but the style of writing places its date about the middle of Elizabeth's reign.

with an oak branch in his mouth, over the archway, was the crest of the Fitzalans, and is borne by the present earl-marshal of England, as the dexter supporter of his shield. The oak branch on the seal of king Oswald, as mentioned in the MS. of John Davies, esq. Recorder, 1835, was a mere ornament; as on those of the bailiffs of Shrewsbury, and several royal seals in the time of Edward I. There is a very ancient carving of the horse and oak bough in the old house at Trenewydd, near Whittington.

THE BEATRICE-GATE



was probably erected by Thomas, earl of Arundel,

in the beginning of the reign of Henry IV. who named it in compliment to his wife, Beatrice, natural daughter to the king of Portugal. Over this gate were the arms of the Fitzalans, a lion rampant.—**WILLOW-GATE** (properly, Wallia-gate) took its name from being the thoroughfare to Wales, over the boundary of Offa. The precise time of its erection, or that of the **BLACK-GATE**, which was taken down in 1769, is not known.

Archbishop Peckham wishing to visit his province, (the first who ever attempted it) procured leave from Edward I. that bishop Anian should attend him in the diocese of St. Asaph, personally. June the 12th, 1284, the archbishop made his departure for Wales, and was received with great respect at Oswestry, by Anian, the clergy, and others, from whence he set out on his visitation of the diocese, which was completed in about a fortnight. Anian obtained of the king, a confirmation of the rights and privileges of his church; and received of John Fitzalan, earl of Arundel, and lord of Oswestry and Clun, the grant to his church, of upwards of one hundred acres of land, at St. Martin's; paying yearly, at Midsummer, for ever, a pair of *gilt spurs*: with the condition, that the bishop nor his successors should alienate the same. This grant is dated at Album Monasterium, 1271. Richard, the son of the said John Fitzalan, afterwards confirmed it, who also gave forty-four acres more,

with the manor house belonging thereto. Anian had a long dispute at Rome respecting the placing of a vicar in Blanch Monastery, the tithes of which, his predecessor had given to the abbey of Shrewsbury. The issue was, that the abbot for the peaceable enjoyment of his tithes, gave the whole of his lands at St. Martin's, upon paying two *welsh knives* yearly.

With the usual policy of a conqueror, Edward I. employed the Welsh, whom he had subdued, to assist him in the Scotch war; for which, as mountaineers, they were particularly adapted. Yet this policy was attended with its risques. Prior to the battle of Falkirk, the Welsh quarrelled with the English men-at-arms, and after blows on both sides, disengaged themselves from his army: the hatred between them, at so critical a time, was reconciled with difficulty. Edward II. followed his father's example in this point, and with no better success. In 1318, he commanded Edmund, earl of Arundel, to raise two hundred foot-soldiers out of Colne and the neighbourhood of Oswestry, to repel the Scots. A conspiracy headed by his queen and her favourite, Mortimer, forced the unfortunate Edward from the throne, who soon after was inhumanly murdered. The few who had maintained their loyalty to the ill-fated monarch, were harrassed continually. The above-named earl, nearly the only person of superior dignity who had remained faithful, in seeking refuge among his Shrop-

shire tenantry, was apprehended by the inhabitants of Shrewsbury, and even without the form of trial immediately beheaded. For this "service," the "good men of Skop" had all the goods and chattels found upon him. After his execution, the infatuated queen, to shew her predilection to her paramour, Lord Mortimer, obtained the castle of Oswestry for that favourite. In 1324, (two years previous to his death) Edmund granted two shops in Lag-street, to the burgesses for ever, paying the rent of 13s. 4d. yearly. The grant is witnessed by "Lord Richard, abbot of Haggemon; Roger Charles, Alexander of Seha..ton, Lord Richard of, rector of Felton; John, the son of Hugh. Dated at Oswaldestre, on the feast of St. Michael, in the 18th year of the reign of king Edward, the son of king Edward."

Edward III. in 1331, granted another fair to the town; and in 1346, directed Edmund Fitzalan to embody two hundred of his vassals from Oswestry and Clun, for his service in the French war.

In 1397, on the attainder and execution of Richard, earl of Arundel, Richard II. granted his estates to William Scrope, the newly-created earl of Wiltshire, and one of his favourites. In the same year he held his parliament at Shrewsbury, owing to the great love, as he observed, he had for the inhabitants of these parts. So splendid was the grouse of poets

and their attendants, that this was denominated the Great Parliament. While he was there, he made Chester a principality, and annexed to it the castle of Holt, the lordship of Bromfield and Yale, Chirkland, and many other places in Wales and on the borders. But his successor, Henry IV. repealed an act that encroached so much on the dignity of his son, as prince of Wales. Before the dissolution of the parliament in Shrewsbury, a committee of twelve lords and six commoners was elected, who were furnished with full power for the dispatch of business. The king, with this committee in Oswestry, determined that the great dispute of *scandalum magnatum* between the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk, should be ended by single combat at Coventry; the dukes having both appeared before the king in this town. After all the denials, defiance, refusals, and other usual ceremonies, the combatants made their appearance in the lists on the day appointed, in presence of the king and his court. Hereford advanced with his lance a few paces to pay his compliments, but Norfolk neither moved, nor offered to defend himself. Upon which, to the great surprise of the people, the king commanded a herald to proclaim, that Norfolk should be banished from the kingdom for ever, and Hereford for ten years.

The first ROYAL CHARTER was granted to the town by Richard II. incorporating it by the name

OF THE BAILIFFS AND BURGESSES OF OSWESTRY, INFRA PALATINATUM CESTRIÆ, IN MARCHIA INTER ANGLIAM ET WALLIAM. This was founded upon the constitution of that of Shrewsbury. The burgesses were exempted throughout the kingdom (the liberty of the city of London excepted) from all contributions and exactions whatsoever. The charter bears date 14th of August, 1399. Soon after this period, Richard II. was taken prisoner in Flint castle by the duke of Lancaster, (afterwards Henry IV.) and from thence the duke led him in his train to Chester: he there delivered him to the duke of Gloucester and Thomas, earl of Arundel, saying, "here is the murderer of your father; you must be answerable for him." On Twelfth-day, 1400, the unfortunate king was assassinated in Pontefract castle, by eight armed ruffians, but he dispatched four of them with a battle-axe, ere he fell. Different punishments were awarded to such of his adherents as were taken in battle or flight. Our new lord, the earl of Wiltshire, fell a sacrifice to the popular fury on the deposition of his royal master; and Thomas, the son of the late earl, was restored in blood. The earl of Huntington, the king's brother, fled into the county of Essex; but passing through a village belonging to the countess of Hereford, sister to the late earl of Arundel, he was known and arrested. The countess sent news of it to king Henry, desiring him to send her the young earl of Arundel, her nephew, that he might enjoy the

vengeance she was going to take on the man to whose counsels she principally attributed the death of her brother; which, it appears, she should rather have imputed to the treachery of the earl of Nottingham. The young Arundel hastened thither, and loaded Huntington with reproaches. The countess had assembled her vassals, to the number of *eight thousand*, to whom she delivered the earl of Huntington in chains, ordering them to cut him in pieces. The unfortunate man entreated for mercy, alledging, that he had never done them any injury; and all took great pity on him except the countess (of Hereford) and the earl of Arundel. The countess flew into a passion, exclaiming, "Curse on you all, villains! you have not the courage to put a man to death." An esquire offering himself for this purpose, advanced with his hatchet in his hand; but he was so touched with the tender complaints of Huntington, that he trembled for fear, and returned to the countess with tears, saying, "Madam, I would not put the duke to death for all the gold in the world."—"Then," said she, "do what thou hast promised, or thy own head shall be cut off." When he heard this, he was so afraid that he knew not what to do, and said, "Sir, I entreat your pardon; forgive me your death." He then lifted the hatchet, and struck him so hard on the shoulder, that he made him fall with his face to the ground. The noble duke (Huntington had been created duke of Exeter by Richard) leaped on

his feet, saying, "Alas, man! why do you treat me thus? for God's sake, kill me more easily." He then gave him eight blows on the shoulder, for he could neither hit his neck or his head; the ninth stroke was in the neck: and the worthy duke, brother to the noble king Richard, spoke yet, saying, "Alas, dear friend! have pity on me and free me from my pain." The executioner then cut his throat with a knife, to separate his head from his body; and in this manner was the noble duke put to death*.

In 1400, the town was burned during an insurrection of the Welsh. After a peaceable submission of upwards of a century, they made an attempt to regain their ancient independence under the renowned Owain Glyndwr. He was 'squire of the body to Richard II. whose cause he favoured, and therefore had no interest at the court of Henry IV. His resentment against the usurper was incited by wrongs public and private: by the murder of the unhappy Richard; to whom he was strongly attached by being a personal favourite; and by the strong partiality the Welsh had for their late king. In the first year of the new reign, he experienced the frowns of the

* This gloomy narrative of the unfortunate Richard II. and his friends, is taken from the *Salopian Magazine*, March, 1815; and which was published in that work from a MS. in the late French king's library.

court. Shakespear, in his spirited character of Owain, omits the circumstance, of his father's horses being found standing up to their bellies in blood at his nativity—sure presage of his future greatness—but the superstition and real merits of the hero, are finely described by the poet in the following lines :

At my birth

The front of heav'n was full of fiery shapes ;
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous in the frightened fields :
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do shew
I am not in the roll of common men.

After which, Mortimer gives his character thus :

In faith, he is a worthy gentleman ;
Exceedingly well read, and profited
In strange concealments ; valiant as a lion,
And wond'rous affable ; and as bountiful
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin ?
He holds your temper in a high respect,
And curbs himself even of his natural scope,
When you do cross his humour ; faith, he does :
I warrant you, that man is not alive
Might so have tempted him as you have done,
Without the taste of danger and reproof ;
But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

Owain first appeared in arms in the summer of 1400. Lord Grey of Ruthin, had unjustly seized upon some part of Glyndwr's estates, which mostly lay between Llangollen and Corwen. Owain sought

justice without having recourse to violence: he laid his case before parliament, but he met with no redress. He therefore commenced his warlike career by attacking his enemy, lord Grey; and immediately recovered the lands which that nobleman had deprived him of. Aided by the inaccessible mountains of his country, and soldiers, on whose valour he relied, he set at defiance the whole power of England. Glyn-dwr animated by his descent from the ancient line of British Princes, caused himself to be proclaimed Prince of Wales, September 20th, 1400. His chief bard regrets his absence, chaunts his praise, and predicts the success of the war, &c. in the *Cywydd*, or poem, beginning with,

Cambria's princely eagle, hail!
Of Gryffydd Fychan's noble blood!
Thy high renown shall never fail,
Owain Glyndwr, great and good!

In consequence of the dreadful contests that took place during the disturbances of the Welsh, an act passed the English parliament in 1401, by which any whole-born Welshman was prevented from purchasing property, or being made a burgess in any of the English towns; nor were this nation allowed to hold any civil office whatever in England.—The Welsh, in their turn, appear to have used equal severity against the English. They had a custom called the *Asach*, by which it was necessary to have the oaths of three hundred men, before an

Englishman, who had been accused of any crime, could be acquitted. In the same year, Henry made offers of pardon to all that had appeared in arms for Owain Glyndwr, in the counties of Caernarvon, Anglesea and Flint, and the people of Denbigh and Merioneth; to the inhabitants of Chirkland, Bromfield and Yale, to the hundred of Oswestry, and to those of Ellesmere and Whittington, which were then accounted parts of Wales.

In 1403, the resolute Owain assembled his forces at Oswestry, in order to join lord Percy, (surnamed sir Henry Hetspur) against the king. The Welsh chieftan had sent off only his first division, amounting to four thousand men, whose valour was conspicuous in the day of action; in which fell his brother-in-law, sir Jenkin Hanmer. Henry prevented him from proceeding with the rest, by posting himself between Oswestry and Shrewsbury, just at the critical time as Percy appeared before its walls. Eager to give battle, Percy withdrew his army to an advantageous ground about three miles from Shrewsbury. Henry's "courage failing" he sent the abbot of Shrewsbury to offer terms, but the earl of Worcester artfully misrepresented the message to Percy, who, in return, sent defiance to Henry; and placing himself upon an eminence, he animated his soldiers by a warm speech, when the battle began with a heavy discharge of arrows from both armies. After three hours dread-

ful conflict, the fall of Percy closed the tragic scene. His friends fled in great confusion, leaving six thousand of their side dead on the field. On the king's side there fell about sixteen hundred, and three thousand were wounded. Glyndwr, at the head of twelve thousand men, had the mortification of being obliged to remain inactive at Oswestry; but probably pressed forward, when the king's forces removed to the field of action, for Gough observes, that about two miles from Shrewsbury, where the Pool road diverges from that which leads to Oswestry, there stands an ancient decayed oak tree, of which there is a tradition, That Glyndwr ascended it to reconnoitre; but finding that the king was in great force, and that the earl of Northumberland had not joined his son, Percy, he fell back to Oswestry, and, immediately after the battle, retreated precipitately into Wales. However, Glyndwr carried on a marauding war, and plundered the marches.

“ Shall it be said earl Douglas wyll
Avenge not Hotspur's death?
Long as Scots' bloode does my veines fyll,
I'll weare the sanguine wreathe.
Oh GLENDWR! with thy hardye traine,
Why had we not thy aide?
Curst was my fate—Oh! thousands slain
Of freyndes are yonder laide!”

Owain is unjustly censured for his conduct on this occasion, and blamed for what, it seems, he could

not effect. His great oversight appears to have been the neglect of attacking Henry immediately after the battle, when the royal forces had sustained a vast loss, and were overcome with fatigue; when his own followers, and the remains of the northern troops, would have formed an army nearly double to that of the king.

Thomas, earl of Arundel, granted a very extensive CHARTER to the town in 1407. From this, the inhabitants derived several advantages which before they had not enjoyed. The chief of these were,—That neither the lord nor his heirs should seize on or confiscate the effects of any person dying with or without making a will in the corporation: That no burgess should be compelled to be receiver-general to the lord; but may be collector of the issues arising within the borough: That the burgesses should be released from the fees demanded by the constable of the castle, or any of his domestics, for misdemeanors committed out of its precincts, when the offenders are brought to the castle prison; but that the constable might receive one penny from each mansion-house within the town, at his own election; and a farthing from every cottage, yearly, at the feast of St. Stephen: That the burgesses should be exempted from all duties on ale brewed and sold in the town, which had been hitherto rated at sevenpence for every *bracena cervisiæ* offered to sale; and also from the

duty of *Amobr* or *Lyre-wyte**. That whoever resided in a burgess's house, and should die therein, the burgess was to have a heriot after his death; in like manner as the *Uchelwyr*, or freeholders occupying the lands of the lord in the hundred of Oswestry: That no Shrewsbury ale should be sold in the town without license, under the penalty of 6s. 8d.† That none of the inhabitants of the lordships of Oswestry, Meverley, Kinardsley, Edgerley, Ruyton, and the Eleven-towns‡, should take any cattle, corn, victuals, or other articles, to any foreign fair or market, until the same had been first exposed for sale in the town of Oswestry, under the penalty of 6s. 8d. That none of the lord's tenants should be compelled to pay the *redditus advocatii* for the security of the castle, &c.

* It is said, the *Amobr* of the Welsh, the *Lyre-wyte* of the Saxons, and the *Marcheta mulierum* of the Scots, were fines paid by the vassal to the superior, to buy off his right to the first night's lodging with the bride of the person holding from him: but Mr. Pennant doubts whether there was any European nation (in the periods this custom was pretended to exist) so barbarous as to admit it. He observes, that the *Amobr*, or rather *Gwobr merch*, was a British custom of great antiquity, paid either for violating the chastity of a virgin; or for a marriage of a vassal, and signifies *the price of a virgin*. The Welsh laws, so far from encouraging adultery, checked, by severe fines, even *unbecoming liberties*.

† It appears Hops were in use at this time, for in 1428, the parliament were petitioned to prevent the use of them, as "beinge a *wykyd weede*."

‡ There are, Old Ruyton, Cotton, Shelvoke, Shottaton, Wykey, Eardestou, Tedsmere, Rednall, Haughton, Sutton, and Felton; which form Ruyton manor in the hundred of Oswestry.

The aforesaid charter was granted to the *English* burgesses of the town. Until this time, the lord's *Welsh* tenants of the hundred were accustomed by their tenure, to keep watch and ward at the four town gates, for three days and three nights, during the fairs of St. Andrew and St. Oswald, with a stated number of men called *Keys*. These proved unfaithful; for, in conjunction with others, they plundered and ravaged the town. The severe laws passed by the English parliament, at this period, rendered the Welsh incapable of holding any places of trust within the marches. In consequence thereof, and the *trusty* conduct of the keys, the tenants were compelled to allow wages for as many Englishmen as the burgesses deemed necessary, for the custody of the said gates; and the Welshmen were discharged from that office. The vassals of the earls of Arundel in these parts were of a mixed nature; either descendants of the followers of their Norman ancestor, Alan, or of the native Welsh, who were most numerous, and had natural aversion to their co-tenants of foreign extraction. The Welsh part, which lay in the upper part of the parish, was called *Walcheria*, or *Welshry*.

At the same time with the charter, earl Thomas released to the corporation all claim to, or on account of, one hundred pounds left by Richard, the preceding earl of Arundel; as the town had suffered severely and been much impoverished by the Welsh

wars. He likewise procured pardon from Henry IV. for such of his vassals in this manor, Chirk, and Bromfield, as had taken part in those insurrections.

1409. Owain Glyndwr began to make head again. He made great devastations on the marches, and in those parts of Wales that were well affected to the English government. The estates of lord Powis suffered greatly. Henry, therefore, directed a writ to that nobleman, to raise his forces, and suppress, in the most vigorous manner, this new disturbance. He was at the same time desired not to quit the country, but to keep his castles garrisoned, and not to permit any of his estates to be deserted. Similar orders were issued to Thomas, earl of Arundel; Reginald, lord Grey; &c. This activity proved fatal to Rhys Ddu and Philip Scudamore, two of Owain's best officers, whom he had sent into Shropshire, where they committed great excesses. They were both made prisoners, sent to London, and executed. Towards the close of the year, several of the officers of the lords marchers, either through dislike to the war, or for the sake of preserving their country from the fury of the Welsh, of their own authority formed a truce with Glyndwr and his partizans. This only served to enable them to make their inroads on other parts with more security. Many of the loyal borderers were slain, and others plundered, in consequence of these agreements. Henry was highly irritated, and immediately issued

writs from Northampton to Thomas, earl of Arundel; sir Richard L'Estrange, lord of Knockyn, Ellesmere, and other bordering manors; Edward Charlton, lord Powis; and Reginald, lord Grey, of Ruthin; and to the deputy lieutenant of Herefordshire, directing them to cause such illegal compacts to be rescinded, and Glyndwr and his adherents to be pursued, and attacked with the utmost vigour. From this period, Owain never made any attempts worthy of historic notice. Numbers of his followers deserted; which obliged him to confine himself within that extensive tract that forms the Alps of Wales, and act entirely upon the defensive. He kept his prisoners so securely confined, that even Henry in 1412, was under the necessity of entering into a treaty with him about the redemption of some prisoners. The prison where Owain confined his captives, was not far from his house, in the parish of Llansantfraid Glyndwrddwy; and the place is to this day called *Carchardy Owen Glyndwrddwy*. Glandwr maintained his situation, for in 1415, his affairs bore so respectable an appearance, that Henry V. condescended to enter into a treaty with him; and for that purpose deputed sir Gilbert Talbot, with full powers to negotiate with Owain, and even to offer him and his followers a free pardon, in case they should request it. It is said, that this grace was obtained by the mediation of David Holbetch, steward of the manors of Oswestry, Bromfield, and Yale, and founder of the free-school in

this town. The event of this affair does not appear. It was probably interrupted by the death of Owain, which happened on the 20th of September, in the same year.

1414. The lords Powis, Lovell, &c. provided a ship, and each of them, twenty men-at-arms*, and forty archers, for the expedition of Henry V. against France.

1471. Welsh cloths and cottons were heretofore brought to Oswestry, as the common market, and there bought principally by the Shrewsbury drapers. The Welsh wished to draw the trade more into their own country, but the English purchaser could not be persuaded to follow them on account of the unsettled state of the principality. In the corporation records at Shrewsbury, relating to the drapers, is the following order: "25th Elizabeth, 1583. Ordered that no draper set out for Oswestry market on Mondays before 6 o'clock, on forfeiture of 6s. 8d. and that they should wear their *weapons* all the way, and go in company.—Not to go over the Welsh-bridge before the bell toll 6.†" This precaution appeared

* Men-at-arms, as they were termed in these days, were soldiers carrying lances; other soldiers had battle-axes, bills, spears, cross-bows, and bows and arrows; the archers had their bodies well defended by armour, especially the horsemen, who carried lances, and their horses also were in armour.

† W. Jones, esq. left to the company £1. 6s. 8d. to be paid yearly

necessary, in consequence of the frequent robberies in the marches. The plague raging in Oswestry, in 1585, "a market was kept at Knocking, (about ten miles from Shrewsbury) and a halfpenny paid by the drapers for every piece of cloth bought." When that calamity ended, the drapers resorted to Oswestry, as usual. The "covetous and ambitious company of drapers" frequently disagreeing with the inhabitants, and perhaps wishing to dispense with their Mondays' travel to our town, resolved to remove the mart to Shrewsbury. But, through the interference of the earl of Suffolk, in the reign of James I. their resolution was ineffectual. The lordship of Oswestry was at this time possessed by that nobleman; and who, jealous of his interests, obliged the Shrewsbury drapers to relinquish the attempt to establish the trade in their own town. In 1618, the earl being dismissed from his high offices under the crown, and heavily fined, his influence probably decreased; for we find that the drapers in "1621, Agreed to buy no more cloth in Oswestry." The MS. of John Davies, esq.

to the vicar of St. Alkmund, for reading prayers on Monday mornings, before the drapers set out for Oswestry market. In 1602, "it was agreed of good will to give the minister of St. Alkmund's 20s. for his pains in saying morning prayers in St. Alkmund's church, and 6s. 8d. to the clerk for lights." And in "1614, Ordered 6s. 8d. to the clerk for ringing the morning bell to prayers on Monday mornings at 6 o'clock."—*Drapers' records*. Admirable proofs of the piety of our forefathers! What a contrast in our own time.

recorder, observes that "Oswestry flourished and was happy indeed by reason of the market of Welsh cottons. £1,000 in ready money was left in the town every week: sometimes far more. But now (1633) since the staple of cloth is removed to Shrewsbury, the town is much decayed and impoverished, Shrewsbury having now ingrossed the said market: whether better I cannot say; but I say,

"Mantua, vae! miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ."*

The amount of webs annually brought to Shrewsbury, according to Mr. Pennant, was about 700,000 yards; but this is far short of the total quantity made in North Wales. The Welsh manufacturers still "coveting to draw the trade more into their own country," have of late years fixed it at Welshpool, to where the purchasers repair once a fortnight.

The stewards, constable, and lieutenant of Oswestry and Powis, entered into agreements in the year 1534, to restrain the depredations of the Welsh and English, who deemed everything lawful plunder which they could seize from each other. For this reason, houses were frequently moated round, and stakes or fences set around the edge of the moat to make it more secure; within which the people every night drove their cattle, for safety. The particulars of the above

* Shrewsbury, alas! was too near poor Oswestry.

agreements were, That if any person of either lordship, after the day then named, should commit an offence in the other, he should be given over to the lordship where it was committed, to undergo punishment: and that if cattle or goods were feloniously taken out of one lordship into the other, the tenants, &c. of that lordship should make compensation for the same within fifteen days; or else four sufficient men should be bound for their recovery or payment. In a statute of so late a period as 1536, it is declared, "that the people of Wales, and the marches of the same, for long time past, have continued to commit divers thefts, murders, rebellions, burning of houses, and other heinous misdemeanors, which seem deeply rooted in this people, as not likely to cease unless by severe correction and punishment." In consequence of the difficulty of putting an end to these outrages by less powerful or beneficial means, an act was passed in the following year, by which the principality of Wales was declared to be thenceforth "incorporated, united, and annexed to the realm of England:" that all the natives should enjoy the rights and privileges of Englishmen, &c. Oswestry and Whittington, with their members, were annexed to the county of Salop, by this act.

" While quarrels rage did nourish ruineſt wrack,
And Owen Gtyndore ſet bloodie broyles abroad;
Full many a towne was ſpoyl'd and put to ſack,
And cleane conſum'd, to country's foule reproach.

Great castles rais'd, fayre buildings burnt to dust,
Such revel reign'd that men did live by lust:
But since they came and yielded to the lawe,
Most meeke as lambe, within one yoke they drawe."

In 1542, there was a fire in this town that caused Mr. Camden to make astrological remarks; which we* shall take from him, though astrology is not in so *high repute* now as it was in his time. Two long streets, with great riches, were consumed. It is observable, says he, that the eclipses of the Sun in Aries have been very fatal to this place; for in the years 1542† and 1567, when the Sun was eclipsed in that sign, it suffered very much by fire: but after the last eclipse of the two, a fire raged here so furiously, that about two hundred houses in the town and suburbs were destroyed; "that is, seven score within the walls and three score without. Which fire began at two o'clock in the morning and ended at four, to the great marvelling of many, that so great a spoil happened in so short a time." The houses were principally built of timber and slated. Dr. Childrey, who wrote of astrology, in his remarks on this occasion, says, Camden observed not all; for that which is most remarkable, is that those two eclipses happened within two degrees one of another; so that, it may be, the ascendant of Oswestry is about

* Universal Mag. Nov. 1757.

† Two years after, there was a greater fire than the preceding.
"In 1743, the town also suffered by fire." *Rev. W. Roberts's MS.*

the 27th degree of Aries; and, perhaps, the reason why the eclipse of the Sun in Aries, March 29th, 1552, had no influence upon Oswestry, was, because it happened in the 19th degree of Aries, eight degrees from its ascendant. This, adds the doctor, is farther observable, and it looks as if there was something in it; that in 1567, when Oswestry was burnt, Mildenhall, in Suffolk, was burnt too; and that, though the eclipse in Aries, 1552, had nothing to do with them, (perhaps for the reason given above) yet, within the time that astrologers limit the effect of eclipses, two towns in the very same shires, Bungay, in Suffolk, and Drayton, in Shropshire, were both burnt. As these learned gentlemen wrote these things gravely and in earnest, and their opinions, though unfounded, may still be deemed curious, we would not omit what is so nearly relative to our subject. As the register of burials, marriages, &c. for part of the year 1567, is "*dymynished* and lost," probably the church, or at least the place where the register was deposited, did not escape the flames. This is the more probable, as the extremity of the suburb in which that edifice is situated, is now denominated *Pentrepoeth*, which signifies, *the burnt end of the town**.

* If this was not the case, the suburb may have taken its name from having been frequently set on fire in the skirmishes between the Welsh and English.

The Plague visited Oswestry, in April, 1559, and continued throughout the principal part of the year. During which time, upwards of five hundred people were swept away. The disease commenced with a violent perspiration, (from which it was termed the *sweating sickness*) which lasted till either the death or recovery of the afflicted. It seldom continued above twenty-four hours; those persons who were seized in the day, were put to bed in their clothes to wait the issue; and those who were seized in the night, were desired to stay in bed, but not to sleep. This remarkable and dreadful malady, which raged for many years in the kingdom, is said to have originated among the levies raised abroad by Henry VII. from hospitals and gaols; and who, regardless of health or cleanliness, were thronged on board the transports.— About half-a-mile from the town, on the Welshpool road, is *Craeswylan**. At this place is the base of an old cross, said to have been erected when the plague was in the town; and during that time the market is said to have been held at this cross, lest

* Probably its original name was *Croes-wylad*, that is the *waiting* or *weeping cross*. On days of solemnity, processions of the clergy, attended by the bailiffs and incorporated companies were used to proceed from one of the churches to the high cross, and from thence to the crosses in the suburbs, at which prayers were offered up, especially on the feast of Corpus Christi. Here all joined in *bewailing* their sins, and chaunting petitions for an abundant harvest. *Hist. Shrewsb.*

the country people by coming into the town, should be infected; or because of their fears if they did so. Extracts from the "Acompt of Richard ap Lley, Muringer of the towne of Oswestr, for and from the xvj day of September, in the 2nd yere of our sov-raynge ladye Ellizabeth:"

The sayde accomtaunt doth asc allowaunce for dyveres payments, costs and charges, wth provyssions by hym made, provyded, and donne, to and for the use of the towne and lybertyes, within the tyme of this accompte, as herafter particularye it dothe apeer: that is to saye, fyrst, the sayde accomtaunt dothe asc allowaunce for

Mr. Baylyves'	-	-	iiijl.
Sergeaunts' fees	-	-	xls.
Muringer's fees	-	-	xxs.
Keepinge of the clocke	-	-	xiijs. iiijd.

Allso the sayde accomtante doth asc allowaunce for rent bayted to the Towlers (toll-takers) for one qr. in considracion of the PLAGGE:

Fyrst to the executors of John Vyghan	-	-	xx ...
Allso, &c. rent bayted to Thomas ap Rc. for Wolyws-gate	-	-	xx ..
Allso, &c. to David Glover the elder, for Newe-gate	-	-	xiiij iiij
Allso, &c. to Wyllng Lloyd, for Betresce-gate	-	-	x ...
Allso, &c. to David ap David, for Blak-gate	-	-	iiij ij
Allso, &c. rent of Crofft-pystill, in the hande of Rc. ap Mr-dyth, dyssessed	-	-	ij ...
Allso, &c. money payde for wrytinge of a suplycacion to my lord of Arundell	-	-	... xij
Allso, &c. for Lewys Tayler, and Guttyn Furbur, beinge unpayde for settinge of stales, by reason of the Plage	-	-	.. xiiij
Allso, &c. for Rc. Lewther, for one qr. beinge apsent from the towne	-	-	... xx
Tanners. Allso, &c. for a qr. rent unto tanners beinge apsent in tyme of the plage; and fyrste, Thomas Baker (2 other similar items)	-	-	.. xiiij

<i>Glovers.</i>	Item. The sayde accomptaunt dothe asc allowance for them that are deade or fled, and them that are in decaye; and fyrst, Thomas ap John Wy- llng, being a poore man (5 others fled, &c.)	s. d.	.. xij
<i>Butchers.</i>	Imp. the sayde accomtant, &c. Lewys, butcher, that is deade (1. for the like, and 7 fled)	-	... vj
<i>Corvers.</i>	Edward Gorg, fled (2 others fled)	-	... ij
<i>Backers.</i>	David ap sr. Rc. saythe that he dothe not occu- pey his backhowes, and prayth allowance	-	... vj
	David Bobyth hathe ben longe secke, and asc alo.	-	... ij.
<i>Hucksters.</i>	Jonet vrch. David ap Morys asc allowance for a qr. Rent. (1 other)	-	... x
<i>Alls Solers.</i>	Edward Lloyd praythe allowance for a qr.	-	... xij.
	David Glover the elder, in lycke manner	-	... xiiij.
	Richard Salter was longe sycke, and praythe allowance	-	... xiiij
	Thomas Glover praythe allowance for half a yere; aledginge, that he sold no alle for that space (3 others)	-	... xx

Payments for the provsion of the genrall Feast unto the Coo-burges-
ses according to the aunsient costum, holden the vth day of Desem-
ber, in the thryde yere of the raynge of our sovraynge ladye Elli-
zabeth, by the grace of God quene of England, &c. at the making
of this accompt:

<i>Whole.</i>	Fyrste, the saide accomptaunt hathe payde for ii. stryckes and a hoope of whette for brede and for peys	s. d.	.. xj
<i>Mauults.</i>	Allso payde for iii strycke of mauult	-	... xij
<i>Boochers.</i>	Allso payde for a qr. and ii rybes of byff	-	... vj vij
	Allso payde for mytton for to make peys for this feast	-	... ij. vj
 for ij lb. ressyns	-	... xij.
 per	-	... vij.

	s.	d.
<i>Cloves, &c.</i> Allso payde for cloves, masses, and saffrene	- ...	vj
Allso payde for synamon and sugr.	- ...	vj
Itm. pd. for buttr. spent at this feast	- ...	vij
<i>Chess.</i> Allso payde for chesses	- ij	ix
<i>Nyttes, &c.</i> Allso pd. for appells and nyttes	- ...	xvj
<i>Sault.</i> Allso payde for a hoope of salt for the byff	- ...	x

This Account was made before us, the Persons under-named, than

Bailiffs of the saide Towne,

JOHN STANNBY,

THOMAS EVANS.

That dreadful scourge, the Plague, again appeared in Oswestry; which is thus recorded in the parish register: "This yere, the xvijth daie of March, 1585, the plague began in this towne, and contynued untill the xxth of July; whereof died three score and four persons, and no more." The flannel market was held at Knocking until that calamity abated.

The following article is also inserted in that book: "This yere, and the two yeeres that went before, corne was at a greater price, and speciallie this last somer, for in July last past, 1597, Oswestree bushell of wheate was solde there for twentie and three shillinge; Rie at neinteene shillinge, and above; barlie at sixteene shillinge, and otes at tenne shillinge.— And had yt not ben for Dansk rie and beanes, this realme, this yere, had byn like to endure greate scarcitie for victuall.*"

* Wheat at 23s. was a price equal to £11. 10s. now; Rye at 19s. to £9. 10s.; barley at 16s. to £8; and oats at 10s. to £5. of our money.

In the 42nd of the reign of Elizabeth, sir Edward Coke, the queen's attorney-general, acknowledges all the liberties and franchises of Oswestry, &c. by an order that all farther proceedings on the part of the queen, upon a writ of *Quo Warranto* against the bailiffs and burgesses of Oswestry, should wholly cease.

1603. The bailiffs, burgesses, &c. resolve to maintain their rights and privileges granted by Richard II. which were confirmed by their "late sovereigne of famous memorye, queene Elizabeth;" acknowledge, also, their obedience to the right hon. the earl of Suffolk, lord and owner of the town and manor; &c. &c. Signed by 172 knights, esquires, gentlemen, and burgesses. Previous to this respectable meeting, certain complaints had been made to the lord president of the Marches, against the earl of Suffolk's steward. On this account, the earl writes

"To his good freinds, the Burgesses and Townsmen of his Towne and Manor of Oswester:"

I HAVE of late receaved a Letter from my honble good Lord & freind, the L. President of

The lower orders chiefly subsisted, in scarce seasons, on horse-bread, which was a composition of beans, oats and bran. Many poor persons died for want. It is likely there was rioting on account of the high price of provision: "David ap Rynalde ap John Lewis slaine the xviijth day [of October, 1597] by Thomas Price, one of the sergeants-at-mace of the towne of Oswestree." *P. Reg.*

*Wales, w^{ch} declared unto mee, a great desire in his
L^{ty} to give some satisfacton to you uppon a Pelican
given him from yor Towne, as exceptinge against
the Course w^{ch} Mr. Lloyd, my Officer, healde with
you. Nowe you must knowe, that I doe, & will
avowe him in such things as he, in his discretion,
shall find to bee profitable for me; w^{ch}, perchaunce,
may bee displeasinge to you, but herin you may
further wronge yor selves then you are aware off;
for yf you shall denie to yeald mee thoes Rights
& Proffits that are due unto mee, as Lord of the
Manor, you must then knowe, that I doe looke for
at Mr. Lloyds hands such a resistance of yor wills
as I may not bee prejudized therby: & I knowe his
understandinge & discretion is such, as he would
not drawe mee into frivoolous & needles questions.—
Therefore I must tell you, that yf you have refused
th educties w^{ch} belonge unto mee, that I will execute
my remedies as the Lawes of the Land will alowe
mee. But, becawse I wolde not be thought rigorous,
& that yt may appeare that my L: President hath
the powre of an honorable & kind ffreind in mee,
I am contented that yf you doe sende upp to the
Tearme at Winchester, such as shall have powre to
followe the Cause in the behaulse of you all, that
then the questions w^{ch} are risen between the Steward
& you shall, yf yt may be, have an end, by Coun-
cell chosen of each syde; w^{ch} Course shall please mee
well: but yf yt happen otherwise, the fault shall not
be myne, for I desire not contencons; but then, of
necessety, Lawe must determyn them. In the meane
tyme, I charge you all to carry yor selves respec-*

tively and duetifully to my Officers; for you must learne to obey, yf you will desire to bee obeyed; wch you, beinge a Corporate Towne, should principally desire. And soe I leave you for this tyme, untill I heare further from you. From the Court at Wytkon, this 25th of October, 1603.

Yor Lovinge freind & Lord,

(A fac.simile.)



14th James I. 1616. "Divers doubts and ambiguities having arisen concerning the ancient liberties, franchises, &c. of the towne and borough of Oswaldstree," the king grants a CHARTER to the town, extending their liberties and privileges, and confirming them a body corporate, by the name of THE BAYLIFF AND BURGESSES OF OSWESTRY, IN THE COUNTIE OF SALOPE.

In the troubles of Charles I. the county of Salop was strongly attached to the cause of that unfortunate monarch. The gentlemen of the county, on the 8th of August, 1642, signed a declaration in his favour; and the corporation of Shrewsbury resolved in common council, "If his majesty came to that place, the town should make him the best entertainment the troublesome times could afford:" which

affectionate reception he experienced on his arrival there September 20th. Oswestry was garrisoned for the king in the beginning of the civil wars. It was rendered by its walls a place of considerable strength, and fearful lest the enemy should annoy the place from the tower steeple, the governor pulled it down to the body of the church, part of which structure was likewise demolished*. After several unsuccessful attempts to obtain possession of the town by the parliament forces, it was at length on the 22nd of June, 1644, besieged by the earl of Denbigh and general Mytton, with a detachment from the main body of the the army which then lay at Drayton. This force consisted of only two troops of horse and two hundred foot soldiers. The attack was so furious, that in the short space of an hour, and with the loss of only one man killed and three wounded, a breach was effected in the wall, by which the infantry entered. The cannon then played smartly against the Newgate, which was soon destroyed, when a bold youth named George Cranage, went with his hatchet, and let down the chains of the drawbridge, over which

* "Besides the churchyard there are joyned to it two little platts of ground belonging to the vicar, with a pool between them. On the one of those two platts of ground formerly stood a vicarage-house, which was burnt and demolished to the ground in the late wars; vidt. in the year of our Lord 1644, or thereabouts, when the church was pulled down and many buildings burnt, upon the account of a siege laid to the same town, being then a garrison." *Terrier*, 1635.

the horsemen passed immediately. The royalists retired into the castle, and the inhabitants, in consternation, fled there for shelter. Thither they were soon followed. Cranage was persuaded by some of the parliament officers to fasten a petard* to the castle gate. Being enlivened with wine, he undertook the dangerous enterprise. With the petard hidden, he crept unperceived from one house to another, until he got to that next the castle, from which he sprang to the gate: he fixed his engine, set fire to it, and escaped unhurt. This, by the force of its explosion, burst open the castle gate, when the garrison finding it was useless to make further resistance, surrendered on assurance of quarter. The deputy governor, four captains, and about three hundred men, were made prisoner†. The king's party received a great check on the taking of Oswestry. However, only a week after that event, the royalists, consisting of about

* A hollow engine made of copper and brass, in the shape of a high-crowned hat, charged with fine powder, and fixed to a thick plank called the *madrier*, in order to break down gates, barricades, draw-bridges, &c. The petard being lighted with a match, burns a sufficient time before the explosion, to allow the soldier to escape.

† As the assurance of quarter was strictly observed, it is evident that there were no Irishmen in the garrison of Oswestry, for Oliver's parliament had made an ordinance that every one of that nation found in the king's army, should be hanged. When the town of Conway was taken, Mytton caused all the Irish that were found there, to be tied back to back, and flung into the river!

three thousand foot, and fifteen hundred horse, under the command of colonel Marrow, attempted to retake the town. Intimation of their approach was immediately sent to sir Thomas Middleton, then at Knutsford, in Cheshire, who hastened to the assistance of the garrison; attacked the king's troops, and completely routed them; took two hundred common men, seven carriages, and one hundred horse. In consequence of severe losses in other parts, the cause of royalty drooped, and soon after its partisans were effectually dispersed.

General Thomas Mytton was born in the year 1608, at Halston, the ancient seat of the Myttons. In 1629, he married a daughter of sir—Napier, Bart. of Luton. He was returned for the borough of Shrewsbury; and in 1645, was chosen sheriff by the parliament, while sir Francis Ottley, of Ottley. knt. held the same office from the king. Mytton, in that capacity, appointed a court to be held in Oswestry, August the 27th, 1646, for the purpose of electing a representative for the county, in the room of sir Richard Lea, of Lea-hall, Bart. who had been displaced. However, in the early part of the morning of that day, having only a few persons accompanying him, he secretly adjourned the meeting to Alberbury, at which place, he returned his relative, Mr. H. Edwards. Nearly a thousand freeholders assembled at Oswestry on this occasion, for the purpose of giving

their suffrages in behalf of Andrew Lloyd, of Aston, esq. ; a great number of whom, petitioned parliament in his favour, in consequence of the secret proceedings of Mytton. As a soldier, Mytton was able, active, and successful on the part of the parliament, during the civil wars in the reign of Charles I. By his military prowess, most of the strong holds in North Wales and part of Shropshire, were subdued, and he greatly distinguished himself in several battles. The general had the honour of taking Harlech castle, being the last fortress which held out for the king. Love of Liberty, it appears, was the motive which actuated general Mytton in his conduct, and not ambition ; but finding that Cromwell's views were different from his own—which were merely to curb the arbitrary designs of Charles—he resigned his command and retired. He died in London in 1656, and his remains were conveyed to Shrewsbury, and interred in St. Chad's church.

Sir Thomas Middleton of Chirk castle, was related to Mytton, by marriage, and ably supported the cause of that distinguished general. The repairs of one of the wings of his castle in Cromwell's time, cost nearly £28,000. Towards the close of his life, he found that he had established a more intolerable tyranny than that which he had formerly opposed. In 1659, upon the rising of the royalists in Cheshire, under sir George Booth, sir Thomas, then

eighty years old, took up arms to restore the ancient constitution. He proclaimed Charles II. in Wrexham, which greatly encouraged the friends of the king in Denbighshire and Shropshire. However, sir George was defeated by the vigilant Lambert; and sir Thomas obliged to take refuge within his castle, where, after two or three days shew of defence, he was compelled to yield to such terms as the conqueror was pleased to dictate. When this fortress was besieged, by the parliament forces, one side, with three of its towers were thrown down by the enemy's cannon. These were rebuilt in twelve months, but at the enormous expense of £80,000. In the church at Chirk there are several monuments in memory of the Middletons: the best is a bust of the aforecaid sir Thomas Middleton, armed, with a peaked beard, and long hair: By it, is another of his lady, a Napier of Luton.

An abridgment of the CHARTER granted by his majesty CHARLES II. the 13th day January, 1673, to the ancient borough and corporation of Oswestry, alias Oswaldstrey, in the county of Salop: That they be incorporated by the name of THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN, COMMON-COUNCIL-MEN, AND BURGESSES OF OSWESTRY; and that they are empowered to purchase lands to them and their heirs for ever, and to give and bequeath or otherwise dispose of the same: That the said corporation may have one common seal for dispatching of all business concerning the

said borough; and to change and make new their same seal, as often as they shall think convenient: That there be Twelve Aldermen and Fifteen Common-council-men; whereof one of the said aldermen is to be Steward: and that whoever is chosen steward, must come in as an alderman. And that there shall be chosen a discreet person for Recorder, well learned in the law: That the said borough may have one house of meeting, to be called the Guild-hall of the said town; and that the mayor, aldermen, common-council-men, steward, and recorder may meet there, or in any other convenient place within the said borough, for making, establishing, &c. any laws, orders, &c. for the better government of the said corporation; and to declare in what manner the said mayor, &c. may manage themselves in the negotiation of the said borough: and that the said mayor, aldermen, &c. or the greatest part of them may imprison the bodies or Impose Fines, or otherwise, upon all such as shall offend against the said laws, &c. and that the one moiety of the said fines to be levied for the use of the said mayor, aldermen, &c.; and the other moiety to the use of the lord of the manor: provided, such laws, &c. be not repugnant to the laws of the land, or contrary thereto, or prejudicial to the lord of the manor: That Richard Pope, First Mayor, continue in his mayoralty from the day of the date hereof, until the next Friday after the feast of St. Michael, the Archangel, 1674, and until another

be sworn in his stead. Sir John Trevor, knt. ; Morgan Wynne, esquire ; Edward Owen, Richard Edwards, Richard Lloyd, the aforesaid Richard Pope, gentlemen ; Gabriel Edwards, woollen-draper ; Hugh Price, woollen-draper ; John Jones, mercer ; Richard Jones, John Blodwell, gentlemen ; and John Lloyd, mercer, to be the First Aldermen ; and to continue in their office during life, unless for just cause any of them shall be removed by the mayor, aldermen, common-council-men, &c. or the greatest part of them.— Richard Price, brewer ; Richard Jones, mercer ; John Glover, tanner ; Richard Jones, glover ; Edwd. Evans, apothecary ; John Jones, glover ; John Muckleston, shoemaker ; Thomas Edwards, gentleman ; Thomas Edwards, baker ; Nathaniel Jones, brewer ; Hugh Edwards, shoemaker ; Timothy George, mercer ; Thomas Vaughan, chandler ; William Price, butcher ; and Thomas Felton, Brasier, to be the First Common-council-men ; and to continue in office during life, unless removed as aforesaid. The mayor, &c. to meet on the next Friday after Michaelmas, yearly, and to choose at that time, out of the common-council-men, a New Mayor ; and to swear him in then, if present, or within twenty-one days next after such election, before the old mayor, or (in his absence) before two or more of the aldermen of the said borough. If the mayor happen to die, or be removed out of his place for not well demeaning himself, or for any other just cause, before the expiration of the said

year, that then and in such case, the aldermen, common council-men, &c. or the major part of them, shall elect and choose another mayor for the executing the said office of mayoralty during the remainder only of the said year. And upon the decease of any aldermen or common-council-men, to choose others to make up the number; administering to them their oaths for the executing of their places: and that they shall be sworn in the presence of the mayor, or (in case of his absence) of the aldermen, common-council-men, or the major part of them. In case the mayor be sick or absent, that the mayor may constitute and appoint one of the aldermen to be his deputy; and that being duly sworn, he may officiate the place of mayoralty during such sickness or absence, as fully and effectually in every respect as the said mayor might or could have done personally. When Morgan Wynne, the present Recorder, dies, or should happen to be dismissed, that the mayor, aldermen, &c. choose another, able and experienced in the law, within one month after such decease or dismissal. The mayor, coroner, steward, and recorder, during the time and term of holding their places, shall be Justices of the Peace, &c.: and that each and every of them are Clerks of the Market, to settle weights and measures, and all other laws and ordinances incident thereto; and to officiate the same as fully and effectually as any other of his Majesty's justices of the peace might or could do. Sir John

Trevor, knight; Robert Owen, and Edward Kinaston, esquires, or any one of them, to swear the first mayor; and that the mayor being sworn, he is to swear the coroner, steward, recorder, &c. That the mayor, steward, and recorder, or any two of them (whereof the mayor to be one) may keep a Quarter Sessions for all offences, as fully and effectually as the justices of the said county of Salop may do; and that any one of them may commit to the common gaol of the said county any person accused of treason, murder, man-slaughter, or felony whatsoever: and that the justices of the said county have no power to intermeddle with the said borough upon any cause whatsoever. That the mayor (for the time being) shall choose any inhabitants of the borough, Constables; and to swear them in accordingly. The mayor to choose Two Sergeants, to attend upon him or his deputy, when required; and to continue for one year (if they well demean themselves): and that the said sergeants shall carry two maces with his Majesty's and successors' arms, and the arms of the lord of the manor thereon, in their hands or upon their shoulders, bare-headed, before the mayor, when required: and that the said sergeants shall be sworn by the mayor, for the due executing of all precepts, warrants, &c. The last mayor to be Coroner, who shall have as full power to officiate as any other coroner in any of his Majesty's counties hath, or may have; and not to execute his power before he sworn before the mayor

or his deputy : and upon the death of any coroner, the mayor, aldermen, &c. to choose another. A Court of Record to be kept every Friday, at the guild-hall, before the mayor or his deputy ; and to try all actions and causes whatsoever, as fully as the bailiffs and burgesses formerly did, or as fully as any corporation in his Majesty's kingdom do, or did formerly : and that the mayor, &c. shall have to their use the one moiety of the issues, amerciaments, &c. ; and the other moiety thereof, to the use of the lord of the manor. John Morral to be Common Clerk of the Borough, and Clerk of the Court ; and may have a deputy, to be appointed by the steward : that the common clerk to be nominated by the lord of the manor, and to be sworn, as well as all other officers, by the mayor : that if he shall not reside in the said borough then he shall employ in his absence, a honest and able attorney of the said court, to be approved of by the steward : and the said attorney shall officiate in the time of his absence.— Six Attornies to be of the court : whereof four to be chosen by the mayor, and two by the steward. One Marshal, or Orier to be chosen by the mayor. The mayor, aldermen, &c. to have within the borough, a Gaol or Prison, for detaining of all prisoners committed by the mayor, steward, or recorder, or any of them : and that the mayor, recorder, clerk of the market, common clerk, marshal, keepers of the prison, and sergeants (for the time being) shall receive such

Fees, &c. as the bailiffs, &c. of Ludlow, and the said borough, have hitherto received*. All burgesses and other inhabitants of the said borough to pay scot and lot, and to be assessed for the maintenance, good order, and further profit of the same; and in default of payment, distresses to be laid upon their goods.— The mayor, &c. to have Power to elect persons who have served seven years' apprenticeship, or that have been householders (paying scot and lot) seven years within the said borough, Burgesses: and with the approbation of the steward, to make any other person burgess of the said borough; and so continue, unless for any just cause he be expelled by the mayor, &c. No Stranger or Foreigner shall exercise any Trade in the borough (except it be in time of fair) unless he be a burgess; nor keep any shop, without special licence from the mayor, aldermen, &c. or the major part of them: the mayor, &c. to punish such foreigners and strangers by fines, and to distress upon their goods, in default of payment. The mayor and corporation, and burgesses, Exempt from serving on Juries out of the borough, at assizes or quarter-sessions. The corporation to have return of writs; and all which returns to be made by the mayor. No high-sheriff, or any of his officers, to enter the liberty, unless in defect of the mayor, for the time being. The mayor or

* Ludlow fees are half of the Common Pleas.

clerk to receive recognizances according to form of Statute Merchant, or Acton Burnell*; and to make execution, &c. as fully as any other town can do, by virtue of the said statute: and that there shall be a seal for the sealing of those recognizances. The mayor and corporation may purchase lands, &c. not exceeding £50. a year, but such as are not held *in-capite* or knights'-service†. The said borough is to enjoy Two Markets weekly, for ever: that is, one upon a Wednesday and the other upon a Friday. To have a Fair on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th days of March, yearly; and the Fairs on the 1st and 2nd of May; the 4th and 5th of August; and the 29th and 30th of November to be continued, as heretofore‡. And if any of the said fairs shall fall upon the Lord's-day, then the same to be kept on the Monday following. The mayor, &c. may hold a Court of Pie-powder|| at the time of the fairs; and to take the usual tolls of markets and fairs—all rights, &c. of the lord of the manor excepted.

* At Acton Burnell, near Shrewsbury, Edward I. summoned his parliament to meet, in 1283. The nobles sat in the castle, and the commons deliberated upon the important affairs of the nation within the humble walls of a *barn*! Here was ordained the Statute Merchant, thence called the Statute of Acton Burnell.

† A tenure, whereby several lands were anciently held of the king, upon condition to bear arms in his service. This tenure drew after it, homage, escuage, marriage, wardship, and other incumbrances, and was therefore abolished by Charles II.

‡ The fairs and markets as now held, will be seen in a future page.

|| A court to do justice to buyer and seller, redress disorders, &c.

At an assembly of the mayor, aldermen, and common-council, 14th of January, 1677, the following Bye-laws were made, by virtue of his Majesty's letters patent: The mayor to have the casting vote in all assemblies: all persons (not being burgesses) vending merchandise within the town, (except at fairs) to be assessed: an assessment to be imposed upon the inhabitants, &c. towards defraying the expence of renewing the charter, being one hundred pounds, and upwards: summonses to be given to inhabiting burgesses (not before sworn) to be sworn before the mayor, or be disfranchised: refusing to serve as aldermen or common-council-men, forfeit £10. each: refusing to serve as mayor, £30.: the mayor to have all small tolls; the benefit of weighing wool and yarn, at the standings in the streets and hall; the stallage and pitching-penny; and the profit and disposition of the office of sealing leather: no attorney be continued in the court, except a burgess: every inhabitant within the walls, to pave to the ridge or crest-stone before his house, at his own expence: lands to be assessed without the walls, for paving the suburbs.

Aug. 1689. A resolution of the company of tanners, in support of their rights and privileges against infringement, observes, "That William Rogers, a foreigner to the said company, usually buys hides and skins within the borough of Oswestry, to the breaking and infringing of their said liberties: and

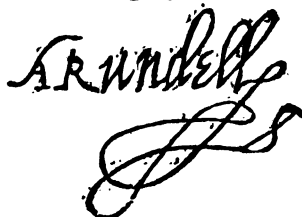
that an action against the said William Rogers shall be brought, in order to try his right; and also that the expence be jointly defrayed." Signed by nineteen of the company.

Although the freemen of the borough were, in former days, so tenacious of their privileges, it appears that "foreigners" frequently intruded themselves. A letter on this subject, from Thomas, earl of Arundel, concerning the bakers' company, is preserved among the corporation records. The following is a copy:

WHERE I am enformed that the Bakers of the Towne of Oswaldestrie wer, by myne Auncestors, the Earles of Arundell, encorporated by Charter, which about xxx yeres past was burnte. By reason of the wante thereof, and by yor negligence, you suffered foreyners dwellinge oute of the saide Towne. And also foreyners dwellinge within the same Towne, to Bake; not regarding the keepinge of th' assise thereof, ne yet whether the same be made good and holsome, as by the lawes and Statutes of this Realme you are bounde to looke ynto, & to see aull suche personnes as shall offend herein, dewlie punisshed. These are, therfor, to will and Charge you ymmediatlie uppon the receipte hereof, you do travayle herein to Shutt oute all foreyners, being Bakers; And to Advauce all suche as are ffree and be encorporated within yor Towne: And yet no further allowe of them Then thier habilitie And thier good order in kepinge of the assyse, and making the Bredde holsome, shall allowe you. And

*to allowe of fforeyners, yf the habilitie of the Bakers,
 wch be encorperated, be not able to serve the Towne; to
 th'ende the Towne may not be unserved: And yet have
 regarde to the assyse, And to the holsomnes of the
 same. And to the preservacon of my inheritaunce, of
 all which, I prate you to take good care and diligence.
 Fare you well. From Arundell house, this xvijth of
 of Octobbre, 1582.*

Yor lovinge frend,



(A fac-simile.)

That high-church meteor, and party-tool, Doctor Sacheverell, was, in 1709, presented to the living of Sellatyn; not so much on account of its value, as to give him an opportunity of making a progress through a long extent of the kingdom; and of trying the inclinations of the people in the rich and populous counties he was to pass through. He was met on the confines of this county by five thousand horsemen, among whom were the first fortunes of Shropshire. He met with respect, in every town—little short of adoration. At Shrewsbury, above a thousand horsemen went out to meet him, who brought him into town with great rejoicings, &c. He stopped there only one night. The crowd in Oswestry was so great,

“that a good old woman could see only a small part of the holy man; yet *condoled* herself with having a sight of his *ever-blessed wig*, as he rode along.”— He was the son of a poor clergyman at Malborough, and was educated by his godfather, and placed at Magdalen college, Oxford. His regularity and polite manners rendered him a favourite tutor in the college, and his Latin poems, some of which appeared in the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, proved him an elegant scholar. His two famous sermons, one Upon the Communication of Sin, (an assize sermon) and the other, Upon the Périls of False Brethren, drew upon him the resentment of parliament. His trial before the peers began the 27th of February, 1710, and ended the 23d of March; but though he was suspended for three years, and his sermons burnt by the hands of the executioner, so violent was the party spirit of the times, that this completely overturned the ministry. On the expiration of his punishment, he was presented to the living of St. Andrew’s, Holborn, and received with such enthusiasm, that of the first sermon which he preached, and which he sold for £100, forty thousand copies were immediately bought. Thus, for a while regarded as the champion of the church, Sacheverell enjoyed popularity, till at last he sunk into obscurity. He died 1724. Burnet observes of him, that he possessed little of religion, virtue, learning, or good sense, but forced himself to preferment by railing at dissenters and low churchmen.

1737. His grace the duke of Powis visited the town in the mayoralty of Robert Barkley, esq.; in whose accounts are the following items:

Aug. 8.—Paid Mrs. Sarah Evans's bill for wine, for	s.	d.
his grace the duke of Powis at the town-hall	13	3
Paid John James for drink to a bonfire, when		
his grace the duke of Powis was at the town-		
hall	2	6

1745. A regiment of foot, raised by lord Powis, for the service of government, rendezvoused at Shrewsbury. His loyal spirit inspired several gentlemen in the neighbourhood to enter as volunteers, who gave an additional lustre, if possible, to the military appearance of that promising corps of fine young men. In December, that town was in great confusion on account of a false alarm that the Scotch rebels were on their march to that place. Many of the inhabitants left the town, and the aforesaid regiment, being undisciplined, marched out with their baggage; but soon returned, as intelligence was received that the rebels had directed their way to Derby.

“16th of February, 1774, about midnight, a most dreadful storm of thunder, attended with high wind and extraordinary hail, alarmed the town. Its effects were severely felt at the Rev. Mr. Edwards's, of Mount Sion: the windows in the west end were all shattered; the traces of lightning were apparent on every side of the house, and in every room within it; two of

the chimnies were damaged, one of which was levelled to the roof; the closet in Mr. E.'s room was divested of the partition; door, &c. of it driven to the bed-side; the stand of a head-clock damaged near the bed, and the bell-wire melted off. Though thus beset on all sides, Mr. and Mrs. E. providentially escaped unhurt. Some pieces of plate in the closet had something like shot-marks upon them; the wires of Mrs. E.'s caps were petrified together; and the linen as if gnawed by a dog. The pointer dog on the kitchen hearth, and four chickens in the yard, were killed. The lives of the family were preserved. The alarm was dreadful, but the repairs of the house did not exceed seven or eight pounds.

“1778. It is to be remarked, that the weather continued mostly cold until the middle of June, and the Sun was very shy of shewing his face; but he made ample amends from that time, for we have not, of late years, experienced such warm summer weather. On the 27th of June, a thunder storm alarmed the town of Oswestry—the lightning was terrible. Its severities fell upon the house of Mr. Fox, carrier, whose servant-maid was killed in the act of rocking the child* in the cradle. No other lives were lost, although there were many in the house, nor damage done, except a bedstead shivered to pieces. The old

* The present Mr. William Fox, saddler.

year closed with a tempestuous wind, and new-year's morn (1779) sounded the same alarm, attended with a keen biting frost. The accounts of its effect by sea and land are dreadful: buildings, trees, and shipping have suffered greatly, and many lives are lost. The storm at the commencement of the year 1779, seemed to forebode a turbulent year; at least, so it has turned out.—The war with the revolted colonies of America still continues to rage; add to this, a war with France and Spain; the Irish *bullying* for a free trade; the Scots *grumbling* on account of the repeal of the Roman Catholic bill of pains and penalties; and—as if these evils were not sufficient—a formidable opposition in parliament: parties carried so far, as to endanger the constitution. Poor Old England! under these complicated troubles, without an ally.—Heaven grant that the new year may be productive of happier times! The old year, however—thanks to an indulgent Providence—has not closed without opening to us a dawn of comfort; and the new year seems to be ushering in brightening omens of future success against our perfidious enemies. The failure of the attack upon Savannah, in Georgia, by the grand French fleet under the count D'Estaing, assisted by the American army under general Lincoln; and the dispersing of the French fleet by a storm, has given a new face to affairs in that quarter: the taking of Fort Omoa in the West Indies, from the Spaniards, together with the capture of some of their galleons,

1781. The thirty-fourth regiment, under the command of colonel Peacock, on duty here.

1784. Through the carelessness of some workmen employed at the hall erecting at Llanforda, it took fire and was entirely consumed. Robert Edwards of this town, in endeavouring to extinguish the flames, lost his life by a stone falling upon him.

September, 1802. The races re-commenced under the patronage of sir Watkin Williams Wynn, bart. after being discontinued seventeen years.

1808. The Parliament gave its sanction for the Holyhead and London mail coach to run through Oswestry instead of Chester: the road is not only much shortened, but made most agreeably convenient.

From Holyhead to London, by Conway and Chester,		
the mail coach road	-	- 280 Miles
By Capel Cerrig, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, &c.	-	- 258
	Saving	22

The mail coach first passed through the town, the 6th of September, 1808; on which occasion, great rejoicing took place.

1809. An act of parliament passed, for paving, cleansing, lighting, watching, and otherwise improving the streets, and other public passages and places within the town and Borough of Oswestry.

1811—14. About three hundred prisoners of war, (military and naval) on parole here. These were in the service of Napoleon Buonaparte, the self-created emperor of the French, and consisted of French, Germans, Spaniards, Dutchmen, Poles, &c. Among whom, were the prince D'Aremberg, general Phillipon, (who broke his parole) and several other officers of note.

1814. A man while cleaning a well at Gobowen, near Oswestry, lost his life by the sides falling in upon him. From Monday evening till Thursday, the unfortunate man lay buried beneath a great depth of rubbish. On account of the precarious state of the well, great caution was necessary in clearing it; and on the evening of the latter day, it was found that life still remained. No exertion was now spared to rescue him from his perilous situation; but, although nourishment was conveyed to him as early as possible, he expired about three o'clock on Friday morning, and his body could not be drawn up until several hours afterwards. Great praise is due to several gentlemen of the neighbourhood for their humane interference on the spot. A subscription was entered into for the widow and family.

During the late war with France, the inhabitants of Oswestry gave a proof of their loyalty and attachment to their country, by raising a very handsome

subscription for the relief of the Families of such men as were killed or disabled, belonging to the fifty-third (or Shropshire) regiment, who were born in Shropshire, or had volunteered from the militia of that county. Intimation of their intention was sent to col. Bingham, at the same time requesting of him to return a list of the men coming under the description above-mentioned. The colonel's answer:

Camp, Echalar, Spain, Sept. 18th, 1813.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 14th ult. informing me of the very kind and liberal intention of the Inhabitants of the Neighbourhood and Town of Oswestry, towards the 2nd Battalion 53rd, or Shropshire Regiment, under my command. It is with great satisfaction that we observe, our humble services on the Peninsula have drawn the attention of the County of Salop towards us, and that we are considered as having merited a place in their recollection and esteem.

I have enclosed a list of those who have fallen in these contests, from our first landing until the present moment, coming under the descriptions named in your letter; that is, Natives of Shropshire, or Volunteers from the County Militia. I have caused to be added the Parishes to which they belonged, that you may be enabled to proportion your charity to the wants of the respective families of the deceased.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) G. R. BINGHAM,

To JOHN CROXON, Esq.
Mayor of Oswestry.

*Lieut-colonel 53rd Regt. (or Shropshire)
and Colonel.*

Agreeably to the return made by col. Bingham, the subscription was disposed of to the following families:

To the family of Wm. Smith, Little Witheford, killed	£. s. d.	
at Salamanca	-	- 17 13 4
Of William Wooter, St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, killed in		
action	-	- 17 13 4
Of Robert Sherry, St. Mary's Shrewsbury, who died of		
his wounds at Salamanca	-	- 17 13 4
Of William Price, St. Chad's Shrewsbury, who died of		
his wounds at Passages	-	- 17 13 4
Of Thomas Edwards, (son of Benjamin Edwards, of		
Cranmere) killed in the trenches before Burgos	-	- 17 13 4
Of William Matthews, of Clunton, who died of his		
wounds at Passages	-	- 17 13 4
		<u>£106 0 0</u>



DESCRIPTIVE SECTION.

OSWESTRY is situated on the north-west border of Shropshire, in the diocese of St. Asaph, and in the hundred which it gives name to. The **PARISH** contains the townships of Oswestry, Middleton, Hisland, (anciently, Hides-land) Wooton, Aston, Measbury, Morton, Cricketh, Weston Cotton and Sweeney, [in one township] Treflach, Trefonnen, Trefarclawdd, Pentregaer, Kynynion, (in old deeds, Conynion) and Llanforda. The outer parts of the town, with respect to the ancient walls thereof, comprise four **SUBURBS**; namely, the southern, includes Church-street, Upper and Lower Brook-street and Pentrepoeth; the western, part of Willow-street; the northern, part of Beatrice-street; which, when Leland passed through Oswestry, in the reign of Henry VIII. had "many barns for corn and hay, to the number VII score several barns:" the eastern, Black-gate; in which, there were "XXX barns for corn, with other houses 'longing to the townsmen." Leland's account of Oswestry is

very copious: he observes, "there be, withyn the towne a X notable streates: the iii most notable streates be, the Crosse-streate, the Bayly-streate, and New-gate-streate. The houses within the towne be of timbre, and slated. There is a castelle, sette on a mont be likelihood made by hand; and ditched by south-west, betwixt Beatrise-gate and Willow-gate, to the which the wall commith. The towne standeth most by sale of cloth made in Wales. There goith thro' the towne by the Crosse, a broke, comming from a place caullid Simon's Well, a bow-shot without the waulle by N. W. This broke commith in through the waulle betwixt Willow-gate and New-gate, and so renning through the towne, goith oute under the Black-gate. There be no towers in the waulles beside the gates. The town is dickid about, and brokettes ren ynto it. The chirch of St. Oswalde is a very fair leddid chirch, with a great tourrid steple, and it standeth without the New-gate; so that no chirch is there within the towne."

Of late years, the town of Oswestry has made great progress in the taste and number of its buildings; yet several of those vestiges of antiquity, timber buildings, still remain. Several houses in Bailey-street may be ranked under that head; particularly the Threetuns, which in former days was the principal inn of the town, and the chief resort of the drapers. The feast of St. David is annually celebrated in this ve-

PLAN OF
OSWESTRY.

nerable mansion, which is usually attended by most of the gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood. On the opposite side of the street is another spacious antique edifice, the stories of which, project considerably over the street. On the front of this house, facing Cross-street, is the figure of a spread eagle, raised on the plaster. The Lloyds of Trenewydd, &c. bore the eagle in their coat of arms, and probably one of that family may have been the founder. The decay of our woods, was the cause of disusing timber in building in most parts of England, about the middle of the sixteenth century; but in this town, it was certainly the mode of building rather later. To this cause, may be ascribed the rapid progress of the fires, with which this town has been so often unfortunately visited.

The following unadorned account of Oswestry is given by honest Churchyard of Shrewsbury, in his "Worthies of Wales," including Shropshire. He died about 11th of queen Elizabeth, 1570.

"Ozestry, a pretie town full fine,
Which may be loved, be likte, and praysed both,
It stands so trim, and is maintayned so cleane,
And peepled is, with folke that well do meane;
That it deserves to be enrould and shrynd
In each good breast, and every manly mynd.

Of a notable The market there, so fare, exceeðes withall,
Market—a As no one towne comes neare it in some sort,
marvelous For looke, what may be wisht or had at call,
matter. It is there found, as market men report.

For poultrie, foule, of every kind somewhat,
 No place can shew so much more cheap than that :
 All kind of cates * that countrie can afford * *Delicacies.*
 For money, there is bought with one bare word.

Poor folks They hacke not long about the thing they sell,
makes few For price is knowne of each thing that is brought :
words in bar- Poor folke, God wot, in towne no longer dwell,
gayning. Then money had — perhaps a thing of nought :
 So trudge they home, both bare-legge and unshod,
 With song in Welsh, or else in praying God.
 O sweet content, O merrie mynd and mood,
 With sweat of brows thou lovest to get thy food ;

The blessed- O plaine good folke, that have no craftie braines ;
ness of plaine O conscience cleere, thou knowest no cunning kuacks ;
people. O harmless hearts, where feare of God remains ;
 O simple soules, as sweet as virgin waxe ;
 O happie heads, and labouring bodles blest ;
 O sillie doves, of holy Abraham's brest ; —
 You sleepe in peace, and rise in joy and blisse —
 For heaven hence, for you prepared is.

A rare report, Where shall we finde such dealing now a-daies ?
yet truly given, Where is such cheere, so cheap and change of fare ?
of Wales. Ride north and south, and search all beaten waies,
 From Barwick bounds to Venice, if you dare,
 And finde the like, that I in Wales have found,
 And I shall be your slave and bondman bound.
 If Wales be thus, as tryall well shall prove,
 Take Wales' good will, and give them neighbours' love."

The town is seated on a gentle acclivity, and the prospects from the rising ground above it, are perhaps not surpassed by any of the kind. The rich and luxuriant Vale of Shropshire, is, as it were, a map beneath the feet: Hawkstone, the scat of sir John

Hill, bart. father of the gallant general lord Hill ; the Staffordshire hills, Neseliff rock, the celebrated retreat of Humphrey Kynaston, surnamed the Wild ; the Wrekin, the lofty spires of Salopia, the Styperstones, &c. are seen in the distance. Towards Wales, the Alpine heights and lowly vales are seen in rich profusion : here the traveller may glance upon a country which was eminently distinguished as the birth-place and residence of the children of freedom—a people, who, from their independent spirit and martial prowess, for centuries chastised rapacity and injustice, and made oppression and tyranny tremble upon the throne.

The corporation of Oswestry consists of a mayor, recorder, steward, twelve aldermen, fifteen common-council-men, coroner, murenger, town-clerk, marshal, sergeants, &c. The present mayor, is the honourable Thomas Kenyon ; recorder, Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, esq. M. P. and the steward, John Kynaston Powell, esq. M. P. The charter, by which the corporation acts, was granted by Charles II. The first royal charter was given by Richard II. but the burgesses enjoyed great privileges from their lords long before that reign. From among the numerous recommendations of persons to be burgesses of this ancient borough, the reader is presented with a copy of one from the celebrated general Mytton ; the original of which, is kept among the records of the corporation.

Gentlemen,

I am become a Suitor to of John George, a free man of yor Towne, and one yt hath formerly binne firm and Loyall for yr preservation & defence thereof in time of triall. My desire therefore is, yt you would use your utermost Endeavors, & afford him yor best assistance in makinge him Burgesse thereof att yr next Election; wch curtesy to him, shall be acknowledged as donne to him yt is

*Yor assured freind
to serve you,*

*Hallston,
Jan. 1, 1646.*

J^{no}. Mytton

On the cover—To the wor^d my very good ffreinds the bayliffes of the towne of Oswalldstree this is sent.

The population in 1801, amounted to 5,839, and the number of houses, 1,217. The trade in Welsh flannels was once esteemed of considerable importance, but has completely fallen off. Excellent coals are procured near the town, and also lime and building stone. The Ellesmere canal, which unites with the Montgomeryshire line at Llanymynech, is about three miles from Oswestry.

There are six fairs held in the year ; that is,

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Time held.</i>	<i>By whom granted.</i>
St. David's.	Formerly March 2, 3, and 4, now 15.	Charles II. 1673.
May.	Ditto May 1 and 2, now 12.	Edw. III. 1331.
Midsummer.	Wednesday before Midsummer-day.	Corporation*.
St. Oswald's.	Formerly Aug. 5, now 15.	In Saxon days.
Michaelmas.	Friday before Michaelmas.	Corporation*.
St. Andrew's.	Formerly Nov. 29, 30, and Dec. 1. now December 10.	Henry III. 1227.

According to ancient custom, the fairs are proclaimed on the day previous thereto ; and watchmen are sworn for keeping order during the night.—*See page 41.* Disbursements in the mayors' accounts :

1721—2.	Paid att severall times for wine att the faires	£3 18 0
1722—3.	Wine and biskett at the 4 faires	1 8 0

The markets are held on Wednesday and Saturday ; the former of which, is the principal. The butchers' shops are chiefly confined to the Bailey-street, and are usually stored with excellent meat on those days. The corn market is held on Bailey-head ; fish, cheese, butter, vegetables, &c. are exposed for sale at the Cross ; and glass and earthenware, near the Independent chapel.

The following is a statement of the prices of

* In the last century.

provision in ancient times, and in some remarkable seasons of latter date:

961. An ox, 2s. 6d. a cow, 2s. a sheep, 1s. a pig, 8d. Land on the borders sold for 1s. per acre. 1225. Three gal of ale, 1d.
1177. Provender for 20 horses, 4d. food for 100 men, 12d.
1315. The Prices of provision settled by order of the bailiffs of Shrewsbury: A corn-fed ox, 24s. a grass-fed ox, 16s. a cow, 12s. a fat sheep, 20d. a shornsheep, 14d. a fat hog of two years old, 3s. 4d. a fat goose, 2d. a hen, 1d. a capon, 2d. two chickens, 1d. four pigeons, 1d. twenty-four eggs, 1d.
1347. A fine horse, 6s. 8d. the best fed ox, 4s. a cow, 1s. a heifer, 6d. a wether, 4d. an ewe, 3d. a lamb, 2d. a hog, 5d.
1454. This was such a plentiful year, that eight strikes of wheat (a quarter) generally sold for 1s. or 14d. rye for 10d. and malt for 16d. or 17d.
1490. Wheat, 20d. per bushel. 1492. 6d. 1493. 4s. 1498. 6d. and wine 40s. per tun.
1524. Wheat, 6d. per bushel; rye, 4d. 1535. Ale, per gall. 4d.
- 1595—7. Wheat, in Oswestry market, 23s. per bushel; rye, 19s.
1620. Barley, 10d. per bushel; rye, 16d.
1708. Wheat, 9s. per strike; muncorn, 8s. rye, 7s.
- 1779—83. See page 76. 1795. Wheat, 21s. per strike.
1797. Wheat, 6s. to 7s. per strike. 1800. 12s. to 16s. 1801. 25s. to 10s. 1804. 7s. to 6s. 1805. 13s. to 14s. 1809. 12s. to 16s.
1812. 18s. 9d. to 27s. 1813. 18s. to 14s. 1815. 11s. 9d. to 10s.

Few places of its size can boast of having abounded more in structures, which a religious spirit, or the necessity of self-protection had raised, than the town of Oswestry. Under these heads may be ranked its castle, walls, gates, and out-works; its monastery, church, and chapels. Our description of these fragments of former grandeur shall commence with

OLD OSWESTRY.

This fine military post lies about one mile from Oswestry, in the parish of Sellatyn, upon an insulated eminence of an oblong form, surrounded by two ramparts and fosses of great height and depth. Another deep foss or ditch at the bottom of the hill, surrounds the whole, and ends, as do the two others, at the two entrances; which are placed diagonally opposite to each other. On the slope of the hill, on both sides of the original entrance, are a range of deep oblong trenches, running transversely between the second ditch and another, which seems to be designed for their immediate protection; for the first extends no farther than these trenches; the other, to no great distance beyond them. The top is an extensive area, containing fifteen acres, three roods, and eight perches of fertile ground; and the fortifications which encompass it, cannot be less than forty or fifty acres, covered with timber, brushwood, and brambles. A well, probably for the purpose of hiding treasure, was discovered here; a pavement in another place, perhaps to prevent the horses, &c. from injuring the ground; and pieces of iron, like armour. In 1767, as much timber was cut down from the ramparts as sold for £17,000. "Remarking to a gentleman," says Mr. Hutton, "that I had gleaned some anecdotes relative to Oswald, he asked me if I had seen Old Oswestry, where, he assured me, the town formerly

stood. I smiled, and answered him in the negative. He then told me, "that the town had *travelled* three-quarters of a mile to the place where it had taken up its present abode." This belief, I found had been adopted by others with whom I conversed." This place is also called *Hen Ddinas*, (old place) and anciently *Caer Ogyrfan*, from Ogyrfan, a hero, co-existant with Arthur. There is no certainty of the origin of it: some ascribe it to Oswald or to Penda, and imagine that it was possessed, before the battle of Maserfield, by one of those princes. Others think it to have been the work of the ancient Britons; for its construction, even to the oblong trenches, is British: that of Bryn y Cloddiau, on the Clwydian hills, which divide Flintshire from the vale of Clwyd, is a similar work. It is evident that this magnificent work was not a sudden operation, like that of a camp, but that it was a work of immense labour and ample security. There are two or three out-posts. Of the ancient Britons, Speed speaks thus: "Now touching their domestick matters, their buildings were many, and like to them of the Gauls: notwithstanding they gave the name of townes to certain combersome woods, which they have fortified with rampires and ditches, whither they retreat and resort to eschue the invasions of their enemies. Which stand them in good stead, for when they have, by felling of trees, mounted and fenced therewith a spacious round plot of ground, there they build for themselves houses and cottages;

and for their cattell set up stals and folds, but those for the present use onely, and not for long continuance."

A great dyke and foss, called WATT'S DYKE, is continued from each side of this post. This work is little known, notwithstanding it is equal in depth, though not in extent, to that of Offa, with which it has been frequently confounded. Of the formation of this dyke as to time or occasion, no authentic information can be found. It runs nearly in a direction with that of Offa's, but at unequal distances, from five hundred yards to four miles. The space intervening between the two was considered as free ground, where the Britons, Danes, &c. might meet with safety for commercial purposes. Camden says, that below the castle of Whittington, Wrenoc, the son of Meyric, received certain lands, which he was to hold by the service of being the king's (Henry II.) latimer or interpreter between the parties.

"There is a famous thing

Called Offa's Dyke, that reacheth farre in length,

All kind of ware the Danes might thither bring,

It was free ground; and called the Britons' strength.

Watt's Dyke, likewise, about the same was set,

Between which two, the Danes and Britons met,

And traffic still, but passing bounds by sleight,

The one did take the other pris'ner streight."

Watt's dyke appears at Maesbury, in this parish, and terminates at the Dee, below the abbey of Basing-

werk. The southern end of the line is lost in morassy grounds; but was probably continued to the river Severn. It extends its course from Maesbury, to the Mile-oak; from thence, through a field called Maes y garreg lwyd, between two remarkable pillars of unhewn stone; passes by the town, and from thence to Old Oswestry, and by Pentreclawdd, to Gobowen, the site of a small fort called Bryn y Castell, in the parish of Whittington; runs by Prys Henlle and Belmont; crosses the Ceiriog, between Brynkinallt and Pont y Blew forge, and the Dee below Nant y Bela; from whence it passes through Wynn-stay park, by another Pentreclawdd, to Erddig, where there was another strong fort on its course: from Erddig it runs above Wrexham, near Melin Paleston, by Dolydd, Maesgwyn, Rhos-ddu, Croes-oneiras, &c.; goes over the Alun, and through the township of Llai, to Rhydin, in the county of Flint; above which is Caer-estyn, a British post: from hence it runs by Hope church along the side of Molesdale, which it quits towards the lower part, and turns to Mynydd Sychdyn, Monachlog, near Northop, by Northop mills, Bryn-moel Coed y Llys, Nant y Flint, Cefn y Coed, through the Strand fields, near Holywell, to its termination below the abbey of Basingwerk. A dyke and rampart, similar in appearance, and not unlike in name, runs through the counties of Wilts and Somerset, called *Wans dyke*, perhaps from gwan, a perforation.

THE CASTLE.

The remains of this fortress are on an artificial mount on the outside of the town, being little more than a heap of shattered walls and mortar. It had a deep ditch extending to the Beatrice-gate on the one side, and Willow-gate on the other. According to Powell, the castle was founded in 1149, by Madog ab Meredydd ab Bleddyn, prince of Powis. A tower here, went by the name of Madog's Tower, says Leland, which seems to confirm the account respecting the founder of the castle. The English historians, however, assign to it a more ancient date: they inform us that it was in being before the Norman conquest, (1066) and that Alan, a noble Norman, had the town and castle bestowed upon him by William the Conqueror, soon after his accession. The Norman period began with the system of subjugating this country, by previously parcelling it out, and granting such parcels to various military adventurers, who should acquire them by negociation or force.— These territories were to be held *in capite* of the crown. Alan was the stock of the Fizalans, earls of Arundel. The castle and manor continued in the possession of this family, with little interruption, until the reign of queen Elizabeth when it became extinct. Dugdale says, there was a castle here at the Conquest: which is probable, for the artificial mount on which it stood, shews it to have been in existence before the Nor-

man epoch. The Britons and the Saxons gave their fortresses this species of elevation. The Normans built on the firm and natural soil or rock; but often made use of those mounts, which had been the sites of Saxon castles. This appears to have been the case with the one in question. A Fitzalan, probably, repaired or rebuilt, and added to that which he met with here. A tower, also, might have received the appellation of Madog, in compliment either to the son of Meredydd, or to some other great personage of the same name.

The square, which is still called the Bailey-head, was the *ballium* or yard of the castle: a mount in the Castle-field, on the outside of the great ditch is the site of its *Barbican* or outer gate, at which the halt and blind were usually relieved. This mount, from its use, bears the name of *Cripple-bank* or *gate*, to this day. By an inquisition, 21st Richard II. after the death of Richard, earl of Arundel, it appears that there was a free chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas, *infra Castrum de Oswaldestre*, and that the advowson belonged to the earls of Arundel*.

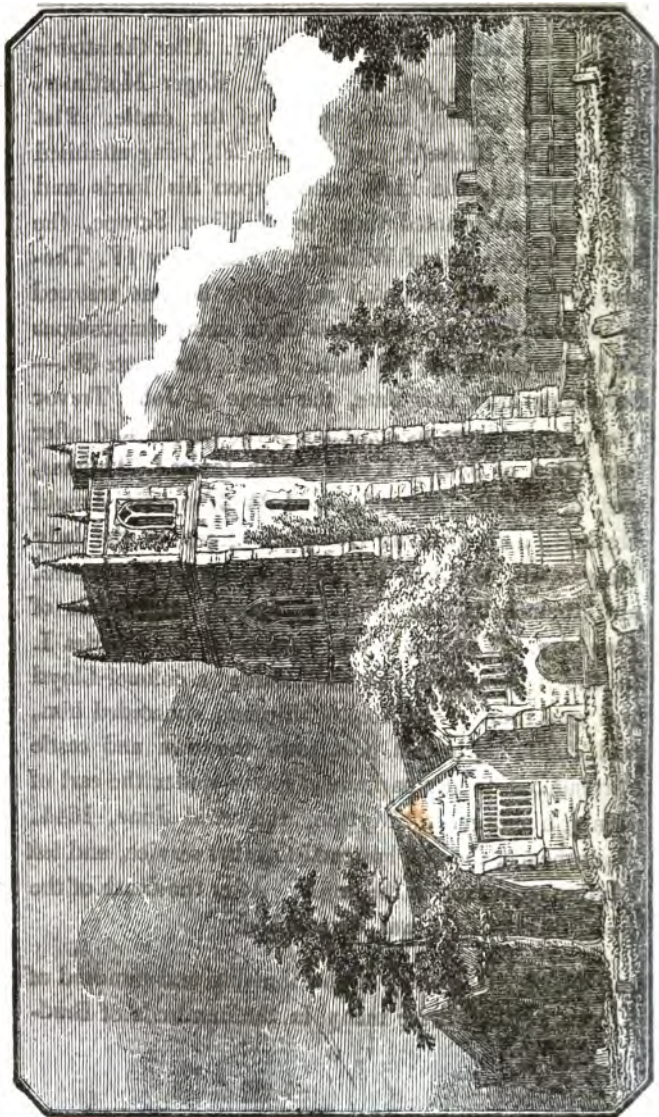
6th Henry II. Guy le Strange, sheriff of Shropshire,

* Although great expense was incurred by our ancestors in building places of defence, religious duties were not neglected, and particular care was taken to have houses of worship *within* the walls, that the daily offering of the mass might still be performed in the event of a siege.

accounted in the Exchequer for salaries paid out of the king's revenues to the wardens in the castle of **Blancminster**, (*Oswestry*) the inheritance of **William Fitzalan**, then lately deceased. 15th **John**. **John**, nephew of **William Marshall**, earl of **Pembroke**, being guardian of the **Marches of Wales**, was at the same time made governor of the castles of **Blancminster** and **Shrawardin**, in com. **Salop**. Henry III. **John Fitzalan**, as heir to **Hugh de Albany**, earl of **Arundel**, had, upon the death of that earl, assigned for his purpary, the castle of **Arundel**; and, upon paying £1000 fine, admitted to the possession of his castle here. 24th **Henry III**. On the death of **John Fitzalan**, **John le Strange** had a grant of the custody of the lands of **John**, his son, (then a minor) with an allowance of 300 marks per ann. for guarding **Blancminster**, **Scrawarthin**, and **Clun**. 1st **Edward I**. **John de Oxinden** had the custody of the castle of **Blancminster**, upon the death of **John**, earl of **Arundel**.—3rd **Edward I**. **Bogo de Knovil** was sheriff of the county and of the castle of **Blancminster**. 8th **Edward I**. **Isabel**, mother of **Richard**, earl of **Arundel**, had the custody of the castle of **Blancminster**, and also of the hundred of *Oswaldster*, during the minority of her son; but two years after, her brother, **Edmund de Mortimer**, supplanted her, and got the grant to himself. 18th **Edward I**. **Adam de Montgomery**, died governor of this castle. 27th **Edward I**. **Peter Meuvesine de Berwicke**, *juxta Akinton*, died

in the same office. 27th Edward II. After the attainder of Edmund, earl of Arundel, Roger Mortimer, lord of Wigmore, had a grant of the castle. 21st Richard II. Richard, earl of Arundel, being attainted and executed, the king seized upon his lands and manors, and granted them to William Scrope, the newly-created earl of Wiltshire. 7th Henry IV. Thomas, son of the attainted earl, after he was restored in blood, freed the burgesses from many impositions of the constable of the castle, &c. *See page 39.*—Sometime after this date, the name of John Trevor Vaughan, occurs as constable of the castle; and after him, that of Jeffrey Kyffin. 25th James I. Thomas, earl of Suffolk, his wife, lord Walden, sir Arnold Herbert, and William Hayward, grant to the lady Craven, sir William Whitmore, George Whitmore, and their heirs, the lordship, manor, and castle of Oswestry. The castle was garrisoned for Charles I. in the beginning of the civil wars: a colonel Lloyd was governor. Sir Absetts Shipman succeeded him, and continued in that post, until the town and castle surrendered to the parliament forces under the earl of Denbigh and general Mytton, the 22nd June, 1644. From hence, the earl hastened to other service, and left Mytton governor of the town. After the death of the king, this fortress was demolished.

From the tenants of the lordship and hundred of Oswestry there were many in the hundreds of Brad-



ford and Pimhill, whose tenure was to do service at this castle, as may be seen in *The Feodarium in App.*

WALLS AND GATES.—See page 23.

MONASTERY, &c.—See page 10.

THE CHURCH.

(*With a North-west View annexed*)

The following information, concerning the Rectory and Vicarage of Oswestry, was obtained from the Augmentation Office, A. D. 1812:

“The Church of Oswestry is doubtless of great antiquity—there was certainly a vicarage here antecedent to the formation of the Valor by Pope Nicholas the Fourth, A. D. 1291; for in the record, the original of which is preserved in the Exchequer, Oswestry is thus recorded:

“*St. Asaph.*

Spiritualities.

DEANERY OF MARCHIA.

Church of Oswalstra.

	L.	S.	D.
<i>Rectory</i>	26	13	4
<i>Vicarage</i>	8	13	4

“From this it is evident, that the vicarial endowment of Oswestry must be of a date prior to 1291; and in all probability therefore, so ancient, as to preclude the expectation of its being extant.

“The church of Oswestry was, in early times, given to the monastery of Shrewsbury, and afterwards appropriated thereto, and the rectory and tithes con-

verted to the uses of the said monastery. They continued to belong to the monastery, until, as one of the great religious houses, Shrewsbury was by force of the statute 31 Henry VIII. dissolved, when its tithes and other possessions came into the hands of the crown." The tithes of Oswestry afterwards became the property of the earl of Arundel, and now of the earl of Powis, who is lord of the manor, and patron of the church.

The church is dedicated to St Mary. The present structure is of no great antiquity: it is spacious, and not inelegant. The bold square tower at the west end is furnished with eight harmonious bells, upon which is a set of "ill-measured chimes." It appears that the chancel commonly called St. Mary's, was demolished "in the late wars, anno 1616;" and that the tower, and part of the body of the church were demolished in the civil wars, 1644. The vicarage-house, situated on a piece of ground adjoining to the church-yard, with many other buildings were burnt to the ground in the same year, in consequence of the town being besieged. The church was probably stripped of every article of value in those unhappy times: its ancient "well-toned organ" graces one of the churches in London, at the present day.

The interior has undergone great improvements of late years: a handsome organ was erected by subscription in 1812. The salary of the organist is £40.

per annum. The velvet cushion and cloth in the pulpit, and the velvet cloth on the communion table, having the royal arms, and "A. R. 1702" worked thereon, were bequeathed by John Muckleston, esq. alderman—mayor in 1692. The service of plate belonging to the church consists of a silver bowl, the gift of Richard Mason, esq.; ditto, the gift of Richard Mason, gent.; ditto, the gift of Mr. David Edwards; a silver plate and salver, the gift of Mrs. Roderick; a large silver flagon, three silver covers to the bowls, silver cup, salver, and a pewter dish*. The iron gates facing the town and the smaller one adjoining, were put up by the parish, in 1738, at the expence of £46, 1s. 4d. The elm trees in the churchyard were planted at the cost of the Rev. Thomas Owen, when vicar of the parish, between the years 1707 and 1713.

THE TERRIER.

"Extracted out of the publick Episcopal Registry of Saint Asaph."

"OSWESTRY.—*A TERRIER of Lands, Tenements, Gardens, and Tythes, belonging to the Vicarage of Oswestry, in the County of Salop, and Diocess of St. Asaph, taken by the Vicar and Churchwardens of the Parish aforesaid, in*

* Account of plate, from the wardens' accounts, 1739.

the year of our Lord 1685, by and with the information of the Antient Inhabitants there.

“ ALL Tythes, both prediall and personall, due and payable, and accustomedly paid in the Parish Church aforesaid, belong to the Vicarage of the same; excepting only the great Tythes of Hay and Corn, which belong to the Impropietor of the said Parish—the Hay and Corn of the Township of Trefonnen, in the said Parish, excepted, which belongs to the Rectory of Llansillin Parish. From Trefonnen Township there belongs to the Vicarage of Oswestry but three pence for Easter Duties from every marriage, and the third part of Wool and Lamb, and for the milch Cows.— And under Coed y Gaer, in the Township of Pentregaer, there is no duties paid to the Vicarage of Oswestry, but the third part of Wool and Lamb: the Vicar of Llansillin receives their Easter Duties. The third part of Tythe Wool and Lamb, and all other small Tythes, such as Geese, Pigs, Honey, Hemp, and Flax, and such like, growing and accruing every year from a Township in the Parish of Llanyblodwell, in the County of Salop, and Diocess of Saint Asaph aforesaid, called Llynkliss, belong to the Vicarage and Vicar of Oswestry aforesaid. And Mortuaries, according to the Statute in that behalf, in the Parish of Oswestry, belong to the Vicar of the same: and such Mortuaries have been paid to the Vicars of the said Parish for many Successions and Descents, for the

space of Seventy years and upwards, as appeareth unto us under the Hands of several antient and substantial men of the Parish, many of whom are yet alive; and the Hand-writing in and about the Premises of some that are dead, all well known unto many amongst us, both in Town and Country. But within the Liberties of the Town of Oswestry they are not liable to the Mortuaries aforesaid, though the rest of the Parish be liable to the same. Herbages have not been lately paid here. All Tradesmen are to pay four pence for their Hand, once a Year. Besides the Church-yard, there are joynted to it two little Platts of Ground belonging to the Vicar, with a Pool between them. On the one of those two Platts of Ground formerly stood a Vicarage-house, which was burnt and demolished in the late wars; vidt. in the Year of our Lord 1644, or thereabouts: when the Church was pulled down, and many buildings burnt, upon the account of a siege then laid to the same Town, being then a Garrison. The Church is repaired, and the Church-yard fenced, upon the Costs and Charges of the Parish in general*. The Vicar hath no right to any Seat or Seats, or Burying-place in the Church. There are two Seats erected in the middle Chancel:

" * Aug. 30, 1677. It was agreed at a vestrey, that a leen of 60 pounds be assessed by the churchwardens for this present yeare, for and towards finishing of ye church and steeple, and for getting in of ye money that are yett unpaide from the breife." *Church-w. Acc.*

one by Sir John Bridgeman, not long since; the other, by Mr. Lloyd, of Llwn y maen, which is of long standing. There is a third Seat in St. Mary's Chancel, formerly Mr. Richard Witcherley's, now Mrs. Margaret Lloyd, Mercer. Things appertaining to the Church of Oswestry: One great English Bible, one great Welch Bible, one English Common Prayer, one Welch Common Prayer, one Book of Constitutions and Canons, one Book of Articles, one English Homily Book, Two Surplicess, one Cloth for the Communion Table, a Velvet Pulpit Cloth, and Velvet Cushan; three Silver Bowls, one Silver Plate, Two great Pewter Flaggons. Published in the Church in time of divine Service, the 21st of February, 1685. Subscribed the 23rd of the same month, by us, Richard Jones, Vicar; Lloyd, Thomas Roberts, Churchwardens; Nicholas Evans, Edward Jennings, Phillip Ellis, Richard Jones, Hugh Jones, and John Evans. Here is a Custom in the Parish, of what standing is uncertain, yet no Tythe Pigs be paid for a Sow out of the first Farrow of Pigs; but if such Sow be sold out of the Parish, the Owner Parishioner is liable to pay six pence for every such first Farrow of Pigs: for every second Farrow after, the Vicar is to receive a Tythe Pig."

"This is a true Copy of the original Terrier, faithfully compared and examined by John Jones, Dep. Reg."

LIST OF VICARS.

David Owain, rector of Whittington, 1532, and prebendary of Myfod 1534, instituted.....	1534
Peter Brereton	1537
John Price, L. L. B.....	1552
He became prebendary of Myfod 1558, and chancellor 1559.	
William Owen.....	1583
William Horton	1587
Thomas Somerfield.....	1588
John Bagshaw, rector of Whittington 1588....	1591
William Morgan, vicar of Pool 1575.....	1599
Richard Pigot	1602
Nathaniel Tattersall, (deprived).....	1603
Richard Myckleston	1612
John Kyffin, B. D.....	1625
Humphrey Wynne.....	1639
Richard Edwardes.....	1664
Richard Jones	1680
Samuel Wilson, A. M.....	1690
Archibald Guild	1694
Thomas Jones.....	1697
Thomas Owen.....	1707
Edward Parry.....	1713
Thomas Trevor, A. M. Bodynfol.....	1736
Turner Edwards, L. L. B. Talgarth.....	1784
Vicar of Llansillin 1802.	
Daniel Griffiths.....	1803
J. W. Bourke, A. M. vicar of St. Martins, 1803	1807

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.

Against the north wall, within the church, is a curious monument, exhibiting a man and woman kneeling,

“In memory of Mr. HUGH YALE, alderman of this town, and DOROTHY, his wife, daughter of Roger Roden, esq. of Burton, in the county of Denbigh, whose bodies are interr'd within ye chancel of this church, commonly call'd St. Mary's, before its demolition in the late wars, anno 1616. They gave to ye poor of this town the yearly interest and benefice of one hundred pounds, to continue for ever; besides other good acts of charity.” Beneath this inscription: “Underneath are interred the remains of MARGARET, the wife of David Yale, esq. daughter and heiress of Edward Maurice, of Cae-mor, gent. she departed this life, the 20th day of December, 1754, aged 66. Also lye the remains of DAVID YALE, esq. who dy'd Jan. the 29th, 1763, aged 81. This was erected by her son, John Yale, of Plas yn Yale, clerk.”

On marble tablets on the same side:

“Near this small monument lies the remains of Mrs. MARY GRIFFITHS, the wife of William Griffiths, gent. one of the aldermen of this corporation: she died on the 9th day of August, 1774, in the 70th year of her age. Likewise, the remains of the said WILLIAM GRIFFITHS, who died the 14th day of Nov. 1791, in the 81st year of his age.”

“VAUGHAN BARRETT, esq. died 17th Oct. 1772, aged—years; MARY, relict of Vaughan Barrett, esq. daughter of Thomas Kynaston, esq. of Maesbury-hall, in the county of Salop, died 28th May, 1779, aged—years; ELIZABETH, daughter of Vaughan and Mary Barrett, died 6th March, 1792, aged 58 years; LETITIA, daughter of Vaughan and Mary Barrett, died 25th March, 1803, aged 71 years. This testimony of affection and regard, is erected to their memory by Edward Disbrowe, esq. of Walton-upon-Trent, in the county of Derby.”

“In memory of ELIZABETH VENABLES, who died July, 1772, aged 39; SARAH VENABLES, who died June, 1807, aged 70; MARGARET VENABLES, who died June, 1814, aged 80. Their remains are interred in an adjacent vault. They lived virtuously, and ‘all died in faith,’ in steadfast hope of a blessed resurrection.”

*On elegant mural monuments on the north side of the
chancel:*

“M. S.

RICHARDUS MAURICE, Arm.

Ad pedem Columnæ huic Marm. oppositæ,

Exuvias Mortales

Uxoris ALICIE Filie Thomæ Carpenter

De Home Com. Herefordiæ Arm.

Cum unica ex eadem Filia Anna,

Tumulavit,

Septemb. 4, A. D. 1700, Ætat. 22.

Et MARGARETÆ itidem,
 Secundis illi Nuptiis conjunctæ.
 Filiæ *Johannis Price*, A. M. ex qua
 Unum Suscepit Filium *Johannem*,
 Cum Matre placide dormientem
 Denat. *Septemb. 4*, A. D. 1716,
 Ætat 32.

In Uxorum & Liberorum Memoriam

H. M. R. MAURICE, P. C.

In eodem Tumulo

Et suos aliquando Cineres depositurus,
 Æterna Requie fruiturus, si erga Deum Pietas
 Erga Pauperes Benignitas, erga Omnes summa
 Benevolentia illam Requiem afferre valeant

Obiit Primo die Junii Anno

Salutis 1749, Et Sux Ætatis 84."

"MDCCCXII. In memory of LEWIS JONES, esq: for 14 years town-clerk of Oswestry: he died June 5th, in the 56th year of his age. This tablet was erected by the corporation of this town, in token of their affectionate remembrance of a man, who was remarkable for his knowledge of the laws of his country; and for his readiness in imparting that knowledge, with a view to prevent litigation among his neighbours."

"To the memory of ELIZABETH, the wife of Mr. Lewis Jones, who died 26th Sept. 1801, in the 38th year of her age. This small tribute of affectionate regard, as a testimony of her worth, and an expression of his own deep regret, is placed by her surviving husband."

“Sacred to the memory of Captain ROBERT WATKIN LLOYD, of major general Gwynne’s regiment of cavalry, only son of Robert Lloyd, esq. of Swanhill, aged 17. He fell a victim to the yellow fever on the 26th of June, 1794. at Port au Prince, in Saint Domingo, having survived the capture of that place. In him were united a mind firm and vigorous; a disposition kind and benevolent; manners engaging and mild; giving promise of a character, which might one day have added lustre to his profession; have adorned the circle of polished society, and have sweetened the enjoyments of domestic life.”

—“Sacred also to the memory of ROBERT LLOYD, esq. of Swanhill, father of the above-named Watkin Robert Lloyd, who departed this life on the 3rd day of October, 1803, aged 58. By that event, his family lost an affectionate husband and father; the county, an upright magistrate; and the publick, an amiable man.”

A superb monument at the east end of the chancel:

“ROBERT POWELL LLOYD, son of Robert Lloyd, of Swanhill, esq. by Sarah, his 2nd wife, died 11th March, Anno 1769, and was interred in the vault beneath, aged 5 years. SARAH, mother of the above R. P. Lloyd, died 19th of Aug. 1790, aged 59 years. Also, ROBERT LLOYD, esq. the father, died 5th of April, 1793, aged 72 years.”

A neat tablet at the same end:

“Sacred to the memory of THOMAS TREVOR, clerk, M. A. son of Roger Trevor, of Bodynfol, in the county of Montgomery, esq. vicar of this parish 50, and of Rhuabon, 15 years; chaplain to sir W. Williams Wynne, baronet; and one of his Majesty’s justices of the peace for the counties of Salop and Denbigh, who died the 29th of February, 1784, aged 76. Of manners unaffected, he performed the service of the church with a peculiar grace; and by a propriety of elocution, attracted the attention, and raised the devotion of his hearers. He was an active and upright magistrate, a tender husband, kind relation, and steady friend. He married twice—first, Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Maurice, of Trefedrhyl, in the county of Montgomery, esq. 11th June, 1762: Afterwards, Ann, daughter of Gabriel Wynne, of Dolarddyn, esq. and relict of George Robinson, of Brithdir, esq. both in the county of Montgomery, who survived.”

On handsome tablets near the communion table:

“Sacred to the Rev. TURNER EDWARDS, L. L. B. vicar of this parish, and of Llansilin, in the county of Denbigh: rural dean of Marchia, in the diocese of St. Asaph; and one of his Majesty’s justices of peace for the county of Salop: he departed this life on the 10th Jan. 1803, aged 44, leaving an afflicted widow, with five children, to deplore his untimely

loss. Also underneath lie the remains of SARAH, relict of the above Rev. Turner Edwards, and second daughter of the late William Birch Bassett, esq. she departed this life on the 16th December, 1814, aged 52. This monument, a slender token of duty and affection, was erected by their surviving children, Turner, John, William, James, and Mary Anne."

"Sacred to the memory of the Reverend JOSEPH VENABLES, L. L. B. who was born 31st Aug. 1726, and died 14th of 1810. As a minister of the Gospel, he illustrated his precepts by his example, by his piety, benevolence, and general character as a man. To his relations, his affection and kindness were unbounded; for society, his friendship was ardent and sincere; and when his Creator called him to another and a better world, he closed a long and well-spent life respected and lamented."

A tablet near the above—To the memory of THOMAS KYNASTON, of Measbury, esq. who died in 1710, aged 33; also of three of his children, and five grand-children.

On a plain slab near the surplice room:

"Sweeney vault.—Underneath lie the remains of EDWARD BROWNE, esquire, who departed this life 22nd February, 1794, aged 80."

There are several stones in this part of the church,

memorials of the ancient family of the LLOYDS of Llwynymaen. The arms of that family (an eagle displayed) upon two of the stones, are nearly obliterated.

On a neat marble tablet near the surplice room :

EDVARDO . BROWNE

DE . OSWESTRY . IN . COMITATV . SALOPIENSI

ARMIGERO

QVI . VIXIT . ANN . LXXX . DECESSIT . VIII . CALEND . MART .

ANNO . SACRO . CID . IDCC . LXXXIII

SARA . CONIVX . THOMAE . NETHERTON . PARKER

HAERES . EIVS . EX . ASSE

PIO . GRATO . QVE . ANIMO

IN . AVVNCVLVM . OPTIME . DE . SE . MERITVM

HOC . MONVMENTVM

FACIVNDVM . CVRAVIT .

Near the above is a memorial of JOHN LLOYD, late of Gloucestershire, gent. who died September 26, 1726, aged 55 : also of REBECCA his wife, who died May, 1774, aged 64.

A Latin inscription on the opposite column records

The memory of Mrs. MARTHA HIPPISELY, the wife of Organ Hippiisley, of Lambourn, Berks, who died Jan. 25th, 1728 aged 27 ; of Mrs. POWELL, relict of J. Hippiisley, and wife of William Powell, M. A. who died Nov. 23, 1729 ; also of KATHERINE, relict of archdeacon Landford, interred March 9th, 1751, aged 74.

On the same column, a tablet—"Sacred to the memory of RICHARD PRICE, surgeon, one of the senior aldermen of this town, obt. 26 Sept. 1790, æt. 60."

A brass plate near the organ gallery steps,

To the memory of ELIZABETH, second daughter of Henry Wynne, esq. of Dollarddyn, Montgomeryshire, died 4th May, 1794, aged 37.

Another brass plate near the above:—MARY, wife of Humphrey Mostyn, esq. died Sept. 3, 1781, aged 60; also of HUMPHREY, youngest son of William, Mostyn, esq. of Brungwyn, Montgomeryshire, died 12th Jan. 1786, aged 60.

On a small tablet facing the middle aisle:

"At the foot of this pillar lie the remain^d of ANN, the wife of Thomas Vernon, gent. she departed this life 21st March, 1784: also the above THOMAS VERNON, deceased 25th Dec. 1785, aged 53."

A neat tablet on the south wall:

"Sacred to the memory of MARY VAUGHAN DAVIES, who died the 26th day of December, 1800, aged 26: also to the memory of ALICE THORNES, widow, who died the 22nd day of June, 1801, aged

75 years : also MARGARET WILLIAMS, spinster, who died the 20th day of February, 1812, aged 81 years."

IN THE CHURCHYARD

Are tomb-stones, with appropriate inscriptions, memorials of several French prisoners of war, who died in Oswestry on their parole, between the years 1811 and 14. On one of these there is an inscription in mock Hebrew or Cabalistic characters.

Before this article is concluded it is necessary to observe, that as the welsh language is retained in many parts of the parish, divine service was, until lately, performed in the church once a month.— A commodious room over the town-clerk's office is used for that purpose for the present.

It sometimes happens, that the name of a place, or of the site, is, after a length of time, the only indication of the once-splendid possessors' existence, or the building that once rose on its site : thus, by the name of a field, *Croft y Spytty*, that is, *the Croft of the Hospitallers*, it is intimated, that the Knight Hospitallers had once some establishment here; and by that of *Erw Sprudion*, that is, *the Acre of Sprudion*, or *Spiridion*, that there was a Church or Chapel dedicated to this nominal saint; for in fact, he was no more. The name Spiridion, which signifies a

little spear, (and in this instance, the spear which pierced our Saviour's side) being found by the monks in their calendar, they, in the days of ignorance, mistook the word for the name of a saint; and thus, Spiridion became *Saint Spiridion*, and was long in great favour. To him, probably, this field was dedicated.

Near the town also, is *Bryn Rimmon*; but it is so unlikely that the Bryn or hill should have been any way devoted to the Pagan deity, Rimmon, that it is preferable to suppose the proper name to have been *Bryn yr humman*, that is, *the Hill on which Tennis was played*.

At a moderate distance from the town, and on the left of the Shrewsbury road, there is, in a field which extends to the road, a **STONE PILLAR**, about seven feet high, and twelve in circumference; and in another field about a quarter of a mile farther on, there is a similar pillar. Each of the fields, and probably at first, the *whole space* in which these pillars stand, is called *Maes y garreg llwyd*, that is, *the Plain or Field of the Sacred Stone*. *Llwyd* being an epithet of the Deity; as in the expression, "*Duw llwyd*," *the Sacred God*. Between these two pillars, there is still visible a part of ditch, called *the Devil's Ditch*; and adjacent to the farthest field, is another, called *Cae'r ychain Bannog*, or *the Field of the bossed Oxen*.

According to a tradition, common in Wales, these oxen were twins, and employed by Hu Gadarn, a hero of antiquity to draw a monster out of a lake, by which means he saved the country from being inundated. The popular tradition of the Devil's Ditch is, that an evil spirit formed it, in order to convey water to deluge the country; and that the ditch was in one night carried as far as Wynn-stay, but that when the said evil spirit had carried it so far, the cock crew; he was obliged to desist, and it was left unfinished. Absurd, however, as these traditions may appear, they lead to the true origin: viz. that this ground, and the pillars, had some reference to the Deluge. And it may reasonably be presumed, that in the space included between these pillars, some Druidical rites were performed, in commemoration of the Deluge. The setting up a pillar, and consecrating it to the Deity, was a memorial of reverence to Him in the time of the Patriarchs: as we read in Genesis, that Jacob set up a stone pillar, and consecrated it, in memory of his devoting himself to the worship of the true God. And hence it may be concluded, that these, and such pillars, were in like manner the memorials—rude indeed, but durable—of Pagan tradition. It is remarkable, that these stones, large as they are, must have been brought to their present situation from a considerable distance, as it has also been observed of other similar pillars, in many instances.

To return to the town : there are four dissenting places of worship ; namely, the **INDEPENDENT CHAPEL**, Street-Arthur, erected about 1700. The minister at present (1815) is the Rev. John Whitridge. This chapel supports a school for the education of children of both sexes.

The **BAPTIST CHAPEL**, Under the Walls, erected in 1805.

The **WESLEYAN CHAPEL**, Black-gate, erected in 1813. The Rev.—Schofield, minister.

The **WELSH METHODIST CHAPEL**, on the road leading from Willow-gate to Castle-field, erected 1814.

A room in an old house, on the top of Bailey-street, lately occupied by Mr. Roberts, hatter, was formerly used as a place of worship by the Roman Catholics ; the pulpit of which, remained until within these few years.

LADY EURE'S ALMS-HOUSES

Are situated near the turnpike-gate, Willow-street. This lady was an ancestor of Mrs. Ormsby Gore, of Porkington. On a square stone in front of the houses is the following inscription :

PORKINGTON ALMS-HOUSES,

ERECTED BY

LADY EURE,

1623:

REPAIRED BY

Mrs. MARGARET ORMSBY,

1804.

THE HOUSE OF INDUSTRY,

Is a very extensive building, situated about a mile from the town, near the road leading towards Pool. It was erected a few years ago by the joint subscription of the town and parish of Oswestry, the several parishes of Whittington, Felton, St. Martins, Chirk, Sellatyn, Knockin, Kinnerley, Ruyton, Llan-sillin, Llanyblodwell, and the township of Llwyntld-man, in the parish of Llanymynech, for the use of their poor.—The board-days are held every Monday. A writer*, speaking of this structure, observes, that “it is a ridiculously-splendid brick-building, intended, not for a purpose which its exterior seems to prompt, but for the abode of the indigent and wretched. It is a strange preversion of common sense, made by ostentation and folly, when elegance and show become the concealment of poverty and distress. Convenience, humility, and obscurity, should rather distinguish the dwelling of the unfortunate, whether their circumstances be derived from their own crimes or from the crimes of others.” The extensive CALICO PRINTING-WORKS of Henry Warren, esq. are situated near the house of industry, upon a fine stream of water, called the Morda; from which, the hamlet takes its name.

* Nicholson's Cambrian Trav. Guide, page 821.

THE FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Of Oswestry, is pleasantly situated on the west side of the town. The present building was erected in 1780. This seminary of learning was founded and endowed, as early as the reign of Henry the Fourth, by "one Davy Holbeche, a lawyer, steward of the towne and lordship, who gave x li land to it*." J. Kynaston Powell, esq. M. P. now holds the office, which David Holbetcher, the founder of the school, formerly held.

The following is an extract from Theoph. Jones's History of Brecknockshire, vol. 1st, p. 166: "Stowe says, Owen Glyndwr was pardoned at the intercession of David Holbetcher, esq." In a note is the following remark: "David Holbetcher was made a denizen, or free citizen of England, in the eighth of Henry the Fourth. Cotton's records by Prynn, page 458."

Several fields in the township of Sweeney, in the parish of Oswestry, which make part of the endowment of Oswestry School, are called the *Holbetches*.

The under-mentioned is taken from the book of the school, by favour of the Rev. James Donne, A. M. present Head Master; who has, at no trifling expence, greatly improved the school house, and likewise regained some property, of which this foundation had

* Leland—who travelled through Oswestry in the reign of Hen VIII.

been deprived, through the remissness of some of his predecessors :

“ At OSWESTRY, in the county of Salop, the tenth day of April, in the eleaventh yeare of y^e reign of our Sovereign Lord, CHARLES, by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, King ; Defender of the Faith, &c.

“ WHEREAS by an Inquisition taken at Oswestry aforesaid, y^e seaventeenth day of 7^{ber} last, before the right reverend Father in God, John Lord Bishop of Saint Asaph ; Sir Robert Eyton, Knight ; William Griffith, Doctor of Law, Chancellor to y^e said Lord Bishop ; Richard Prytherch, Esq. John Davies, Esq. John Williams, Robert Foulks, George Griffith, John Kyffin, Clerk ; and William Owen, Gent. by virtue of his Majestie’s Commission out of his Majestie’s high Court of Chancery to them and others directed, and hereunto annexed, to enquire for and concerning charitable uses in the County of Denbigh, and in certain Parishes in the County of Salop therein mentioned, and within the Diocess of Saint Asaph, according to the Statute in that Case made and provided, by y^e Oath of Roger Trevor, and other sufficient Freeholders of of the said County of Salop, and of y^e said Places and Diocese, It was found, that in y^e Towne of Oswestry aforesaid there is, and for many years there has been, a Free Grammar Schoole, founded by one David Holbech, who did grant and leave, for y^e maintainance of

a Schoolmaster, and y^e Reparation of y^e Schoolhouse there, the Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments in the Inquisition mentioned*—but in what sort y^e said Lands and Tenements were granted or left, or to whom, and when, or by whom to be disposed, sett, or lett of right, and according to y^e said Founder's Entention or Direction y^e said Jury did finde they did not know.—Howbeit they Found that by the most common and generall usage, y^e Bayliffs of y^e said Towne, and y^e Schoolmaster have, for the most part, jointly set, let, and disposed of the same for use and for Mayntenance of the Schoole-Mr. and Schoolhouse—[*Here follows an account of some abuses on the part of the then Bailiffs, a discharge of these two from their trust, with an injunction to them to make good their default; after which, the deed proceeds thus:*] We do order and enjoin, that the Nomination and placing of the School-Mr. there, shall be left to the Bishop and Ordinary of the said Diocess for the time being, according to Law; And that the said Edward Payn (*the then Schoolmaster*) and his Successors, School-M^{rs}. of the said School, from time to time, and at all times, from and after the Feast of All Saints next ensuing, shall and may let and set the said Premises, or any part thereof, in Possession and not in Reversion, for the term of seven years, under, from the Date, or making thereof, so as such leases

* The total quantity of land belonging to this foundation, according to a survey made by Mr. G. Yates, is 100 acres.

be not without impeachment of Waste, and so as the several yearly Rents before-mentioned, or more, be thereupon reserved and payable during the said term; and as the consent of y^e Bishop and Chancellor of the said Diocese for the time being, and of the two Bayliffs of the said Town of Oswestry for the time being, (whereof the said Bishop always to be one) be first had in writing, under their hands, for the making of such Lease. And whereas it was confessed and proved before us, that there hath been always an Usher in the said School, and that the School-M^r. allowed him ten pounds a year, We do order and decree, the said School-M^r. for the time being, shall always have an Usher of the said School; and that he shall allow him and pay him ten pounds every year, at the Feast of Phillip and Jacob, and All Saints, yearly, by equal portions to be paid: and shall also pay him so much more over and above the said ten pounds out of the improved rents—so that the whole Stipend of the said Usher shall not exceed the sum of fifteen pounds a year in the whole.

“N. B. The whole improved rents of the lands at this time was £54. 19s. 8d. per Ann.”

LIST OF HEAD MASTERS.

— Reynolds, appointed.....	1537
David Morris, vicar of Llansilin.....	1561
John Berkley, D. D. rector of Llanddoget.....	1606 1606
He became vicar of Llansamman 1611, rector	

of Newtown 1613, rector of Llanfyllin, 1614
 prebendary of Llanvair Second Compottion
 1621, and rector of Llandyssil 1622.

John Kyffin.....

—— Lloyd 1624

Edward Payne, A. M. 1636

Rector of Kemmaes 1661, vicar of Kinnerley
 1668. This gentleman was ejected in the
 time of Oliver Cromwell's Usurpation.—

See the Protector's letter in the next page.

William Griffiths 1661

Thomas Clopton 1672

Rector of Kilken 1673, canon 1675, rector of
 Llanrwst 1677, prebendary of Myfod and
 rector of Castle-caereinion 1678, and rector
 of Christleton, Cheshire.

John Evans, rector of Newtown 1666..... 1678

Canon 1681, and rector of Berriew 1686.

Edward Wicken.....

Andrew Guild 1694

Thomas Jones 1697

Daniel Pool 1705

—— Lloyd.....

Robert Patrick.....

Rector of Kemmaes 1717, canon 1718, and
 rector of Mallwyd 1733.

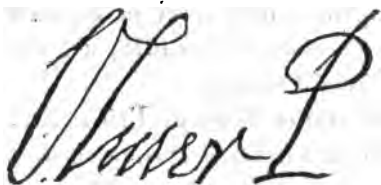
John Skye, rector of Berriew 1730..... 1733

Vicar of Llansillin 1755.

Peter Morris..... 1762

Owen Reynolds, about.....	1769
Charles Anson Tisdale	1772
Eusebius Edwards, Pemb. Coll. Ox.....	1781
James Donne, M. A. second master of the King's School, Chester 1794, minor canon of Chester 1796.....	1796
Vicar of Llanyblodwel 1798, and rural dean of Marchia 1803.	

Oliver Cromwell's recommendation of a Head School-master.—The name is a Fac-simile of his own handwriting, and heads the letter thus :



TRUSTY & WELBELOVED,

WE being informed that the ffree Schoole of Our Towne of Oswestree, is now voyd of a head Schoole-Master settled there, by reason of the Delinquency and Ejection of Edward Paine, late Schoole-Master thereof, Have thought fitt to recommend unto you Mr. John Evans, the Sonne of Matthew Evans, Late of Penegoes, in the Countie of Mountgomery, as a fitt person both for piety and larning, to be head Schoole-

Master of the s^d Schoole; and that so farre as in you lyes, the said Mr. Evans may be forthwith settled and invested there accordingly: which Act of yo^{rs} Wee shalbe ready to confirme, if it be adjudged requisit and proper for Vs. And not doubting of the performance of this, Our pleasure, Wee comitt you to God and rest. Given at Whitehall, this thirteenth day of July, 1657.

*On the Cover—To Our Trusty and Welbeloved the
Bailiffes & Free Burgesses of Our Towne of
Oswestree,
These.*

*Endorsed—This letter we Rec^d
ye 9th of Sept. 1657.*

“Besides the grammar school here, in which several men of note have been educated, there was formerly a CHARITY SCHOOL, where forty boys were cloathed; and taught to read, write, and cypher; and the girls to spin, knit, and sew. Divers ingenious methods were made use of, in this school, to excite the children to out-strip each other in their learning; some of which deserve imitation: twenty were set against other twenty for shoes, and the twenty that performed their tasks best, had shoes first. Then ten more of the boys were set against other ten for the like premium; and so on, till they were all shod. To the like purpose, in the girls’ school, a shift was put up for the best spinner, a head-dress for the best sempstress, a pair of

stockings for the best knitter, as well as a bible for the best reader, and a copy-book for the best writer*." The funds of this charity are now applied to the use of

THE OSWESTRY NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

The National Society gave £200, and the town, as much as made up the deficiency to purchase the present school-room over the town-clerk's office, and the fitting it up for the instruction of schoolmasters for Wales, according to the plan adopted by that society; and also for the education of the children of the poor in the town and neighbourhood. There are upwards of one hundred boys in the school at present. Mr. John Morris, schoolmaster.

There is also a School for Girls in the town-hall, which, as well as the boys' school, is supported by annual subscriptions and donations, and a charity sermon, yearly. Mrs. Williams, schoolmistress.

THE GUILD-HALL

Is situated near the site of the castle, and forms one side of the spacious square called the Bailey-head. It is a plain stone building, with high a clock turret, and comprises a long room, where the quarter sessions and other public affairs of the town are transacted; a jury room, and space beneath the whole, used as a

* Univ. Mag. Nov. 1757.

dwelling-house and shop. The guild-hall is the private property of the earl of Powis. A few years ago, permission was obtained from his lordship to convert the ground-floor into a market-hall; but this has not yet been effected.

THE TOWN-CLERK'S OFFICE

Is a lofty building near the guild-hall, erected with the stone belonging to the town gates after their demolition, flanked with two neat brick-built houses. The records of the corporation are deposited here.—The cells or places of temporary confinement, are contiguous to the office. A room over the office is used as a school, and for performing the Church service in Welsh.

MARKET-HOUSE OR CROSS.

The first structure of this kind, of which there is any record, and probably the only one erected in the town, was a stone or timber building, occupying the centre of the space now called *the Cross*; probably from a cross which formerly stood near it, according to the general custom in the days of Popery. In the reign of Henry VIII. Leland saith, "there goith thorough the towne *by the cross* a broke, &c." 1559, the Murenger of the town, in his accounts, "dothe charge hym self with money due upon them that sell bred, sottinge of stalles, selinge wares, &c. *by the crosse*." It appears the rooms over the same were

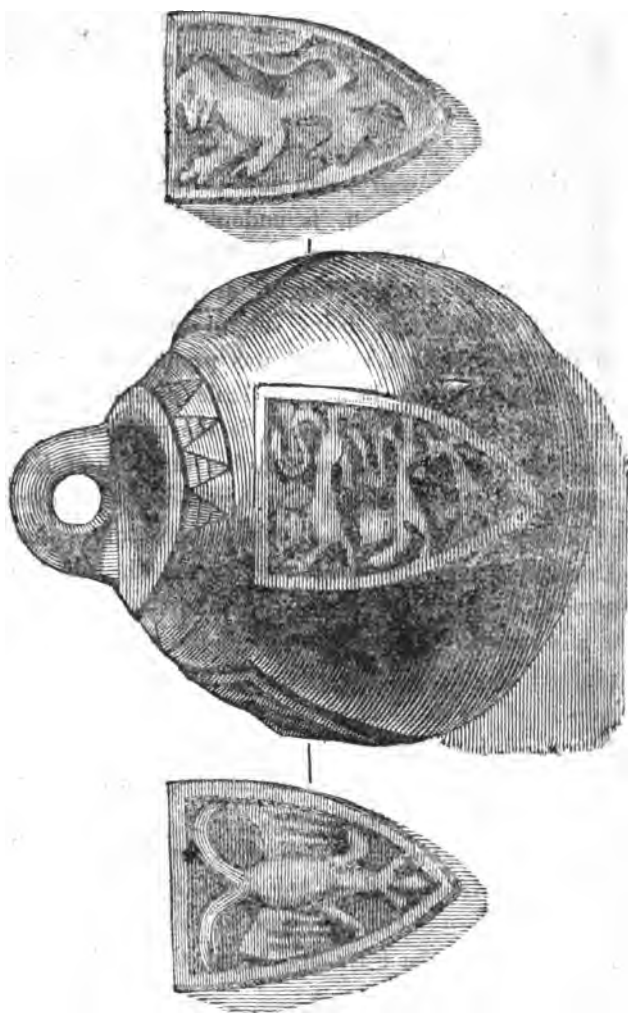
let to some of the burgesses or other inhabitants.—1597, the bailiffs leased a chamber “over the *market-house*, situated in the Crosse-street, for 5*s.* a year.” 22nd Charles I. Morris Evans and Thomas Edwards, bailiffs of Oswestry, grant unto Thomas Griffiths “all those two lofts, sollars, or chambers, &c. adjoining to Crosse-street. &c. together with the *town waights*, for twenty-one yerres.” Of the time of its erection there is no authentic account. A temporary shed or place of resort was standing within the memory of persons now living. From hence, the processions proceeded on days of Corpus Christi; and here, proclamations were made of the fairs, kings’ accessions, &c. A few items, under the latter head, are taken from some of the public accounts of the town.

	£.	s.	d.
1588.—“For woode to begin the bonne fire at her said majestic’s coronacon	-	-	0 0 2
For facotts to make fire at the crosse	-	0	0 2
1702.—To Mr. Charles Lloyd, for ale	-	0	15 0
Two bottles of wine at the Cross	-	0	3 4
1712.—Imp. paid Thomas Edwards for wine for the proclamation day, and for the thanksgiving and powder	-	-	2 7 0
1722.—To 5 fires	-	-	1 0 0
1736.—Payd drink to the bonny fiers ye king’s crown nation day	-	-	0 10 0”

The handsome pump lately put up at the cross, at the expence of the adjacent householders, with an iron ladle suspended to it by a chain, reminds us of

an observation in Mr. Strutt's "Anglo-Saxon *Æra*," in which he says, "that Edwin caused cups of brass to be fastened to the clear springs and wells, for the refreshment of the passengers."

"This ball, (*see the annexed engraving*) found near the Cross, in Oswestry, and now in the possession of W. Ormsby Gore, esq. is undoubtedly the weight, used at the end of the beam in that mode of weighing called the *Auncel Weight*, as practised in the time of Edward III: being subject to great deceit, in the 34th of that reign it was prohibited by statute, and the even balance or scale commanded in its stead. On the first shield, is the arms of England, simply, which dates it before the 15th of Edward, as I believe in that year he claimed the crown of France, and immediately placed the arms of that kingdom in the first quarter of his shield. On the second, the bearing of her lords, the noble Fitzalans, a lion rampant. The third shield has an eagle displayed; the arms, most probably, of the gentleman who filled the office of steward: it was borne by the Lloyds of Llwynymaen, and other ancient families in the neighbourhood. As John Davies, esq. recorder, 1635, in his observations, says, "they had sometimes noblemen, knights, and esquires of the best quality, to be their stewards." I am decidedly of opinion, if ever the town of Oswestry used an armorial bearing, it was that of the Fitzalans, as on this ball. The



horse; with the oak branch in his mouth, as on the New-gate, was the crest of the Fitzalans. (*See page 27.*) At Trenowydd, near Whittington, is a very ancient carving of the horse and oak bough; and as the Lloyds of that house bore the eagle, probably one of them may have been the steward above alluded to*."

THE THEATRE

Stands at the bottom of Lower Brook-street. It is neatly fitted up, and a respectable company of comedians perform therein a few weeks in the autumn.

THE BANK

Of Messrs. Croxon, Jones, Croxon, and Co. is situated in Willow-street. Agents, Messrs. Brown, Cobb, and Co. Bankers, London.

THE POST-OFFICE

Is kept at the Cross Foxes Inn, Church-street, where the mail coach arrives from London every evening at about half-past ten; and returns from Holyhead about three o'clock in the morning. This inn is replete with every convenience, and is supposed to be equal to any in the whole line of communication between London and Holyhead. The house is spacious and elegant, and the assembly room is equally so.

* This account of the ball was communicated by Mr. Bowen, an ingenious antiquarian, of Shrewsbury.

The same observations apply to the Cross Keys Inn, Leg-street, to which place, and the Cross Foxes, the London and Holyhead stage coach alternately arrives every day.

As the following persons do not occur under any head in the work, they are given in this place.

In an old book of Welsh pedigrees, &c. the writer, referring to Ifton, says, "I saw, in the district of Oswestry, a deed signed by GUTTYN OWAIN, for land there. His name was written, Gruffyd ap Hugh ap Owain, alias Guttyn Owain." He was one of the most distinguished of the Welsh poets of the fifteenth century; an excellent genealogist, and wrote out a complete copy of the Welsh history, which is still in existence, and very valuable. It seems, from the above notice, that he lived near Oswestry, and probably at Ifton.

JOHN SWINNERTON, son of Thomas Swinnerton, of this town, being bred a merchant-taylor in London, was lord mayor thereof, in 1612. He founded a monthly sermon to be preached in this church, and the churches of Shrewsbury, Ellesmere, and Whitchurch; with an annual bequest to the poor of each place*.

In the year 1678, THOMAS JONES, of Oswestry, sometime domestic and naval chaplain to his royal highness the duke of York, (afterwards James II.) published a learned tract; the title of which is—"Of the heart and its right sovereign, and Rome no mother-church to England; or an historical account of the title of our British Church, and by what ministry the gospel was planted in every county; with a remembrance of the rights of Jerusalem above, in the great question, Where is the true Mother-church of Christians?" In this tract there is much information, and its being addressed to James, is a proof of the sincere and very laudable zeal of the author; but James was too much a bigot, for argument to have any effect upon him.

LIST OF MAYORS.

1673 Richard Pope, esq. first mayor	1679 Richard Price
1674 Sir John Trevor, master of the rolls	1680 John Glover
1675 Richard Edwards	1681 Peter Griffiths
1676 Rich. Lloyd, Ford	1682 Humphrey Foulks
1677 John Blodwell	1683 William Price ap- pointed instead of Thomas Edwards, who died before he was sworn
1678 John Lloyd, dy- ing in his mayor- alty, succeeded by Edward Owen	1684 Hugh Jones
	1685 Phillip Ellis, esqs.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1686 Sir Robert Owen,
bart. Porkington | 1711 Rich. Jones, ditto |
| 1687 Roger Edwards | 1712 John Skye, ditto |
| 1688 Morgan Powell | 1713 Roger Green, ditto |
| 1689 Thomas Jones | 1714 John Davies, ditto |
| 1690 Tho. Powell, Park | 1715 Thomas Warter |
| 1691 Thomas Pritchard | 1716 George Edwards |
| 1692 John Muckleston | 1717 Rob. Lloyd, Aston
second time |
| 1693 John Price | 1718 Owen Hughes |
| 1694 David Lloyd | 1719 Thomas Edwards |
| 1695 Rich. Jones, esqrs. | 1720 John Evans |
| 1696 Sir Robert Owen,
bart. second time | 1721 Richard Payne |
| 1697 John Skye | 1722 Richard Maurice |
| 1698 Nathan. Edwards | 1723 Nathaniel Price |
| 1699 Peter Jones, Llan-
fyllin | 1724 Peter Poval, dying
in his mayoralty,
succeeded by Ow-
en Hughes |
| 1700 Francis Tomkies | 1725 John Kyffin |
| 1701 William Jones | 1726 Richard Thomas |
| 1702 Humphrey Daven-
port, Hayes-gate | 1727 Ed. Lloyd, Lwyn-
ymaen |
| 1703 Roger Green | 1728 Watkin Williams
Wynn |
| 1704 Tho. Powell, Park
second time | 1729 Chas. Lloyd, Tre-
newydd |
| 1705 Rob. Lloyd, Aston | 1730 Wm. Owen, Pork-
ington |
| 1706 John Davies | 1731 John Huxley |
| 1707 Edw. Lloyd, Tre-
newydd | 1732 John Mytton, Hal-
ston |
| 1708 Thomas Tomkies | 1733 Nathan. Kynaston |
| 1709 Thomas Kynaston,
Maesbury | 1734 Richard Powell |
| 1710 John Price, second
time | |

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1735 Robert Williams | 1763 John Edwards |
| 1736 Robert Barkley | 1764 Richard Jones |
| 1737 Thomas Jones | 1765 John Gregory |
| 1738 John Burgess | 1766 William Griffiths |
| 1739 Corbett Kynaston,
dying in his may-
oralty, succeed. by
Thomas Tomkies | 1767 Richard Morrice |
| 1740 William Price | 1768 John Evans |
| 1741 John Jones | 1769 John Lloyd |
| 1742 John Hughes | 1770 Watkin Williams,
Penbedw |
| 1743 John Mort | 1771 John Mytton, Hal-
ston |
| 1744 Peter Williams | 1772 Robert Godolphin
Owen, Porkington |
| 1745 David Morris | 1773 E. Thornes, esqrs. |
| 1746 Richard Lloyd | 1774 Sir Watkin Willi-
ams Wynn, bart.
Wynnstay |
| 1747 Richd. Williams,
Penbedw | 1775 William Griffiths |
| 1748 Vincent Phipps | 1776 Francis Chambre |
| 1749 Nathaniel Jones | 1777 Jos. Richardson |
| 1750 John Griffiths | 1778 John Croxon |
| 1751 John Williams | 1779 Noel Hill, Shrews-
bury |
| 1752 John Griffiths | 1780 Ed. Brown, dying
in his mayoralty,
succeeded by Na-
thaniel Price |
| 1753 Edward Price | 1781 Thomas Vernon |
| 1754 Thomas Jones | 1782 Ed. Wynn Evans |
| 1755 John Jones | 1783 John Kynaston,
Hardwick |
| 1756 Thomas Rathbone | 1784 Richard Bickerton |
| 1757 Edward Evans | 1785 Thomas Howell |
| 1758 John Bassett | |
| 1759 Nathaniel Price | |
| 1760 Edward Evans | |
| 1761 Robert Lloyd | |
| 1762 Richard Price | |

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1786 Richard Salisbury | 1801 Richard Croxon |
| 1787 W. Mostyn Owen,
Woodhouse | 1802 Lawton Parry |
| 1788 Lewis Jones | 1803 Richard Jebb |
| 1789 John Gibbons | 1804 Thomas Skye, esqs. |
| 1790 John Lovett | 1805 Rev. James Donne |
| 1791 John Probert, Cop-
thorn | 1806 Robert Cartwright |
| 1792 John Mytton, Hal-
ston, esquires | 1807 Thos. Long. Jones |
| 1793 Revd. Turner Ed-
wards | 1808 William Lloyd |
| 1794 Arthur Davies, esq. | 1809 Robert Roberts |
| 1795 Revd. John Robert
Lloyd | 1810 John Shepperd dy-
ing in his mayor-
alty, succeeded by
Thomas Hilditch |
| 1796 Owen Ormsby | 1811 Edward Edmunds |
| 1797 Thomas Lovett | 1812 John Croxon, esqs. |
| 1798 Robert Lloyd | 1813 Rev. Charles Arth.
Albany Lloyd |
| 1799 John Jones, esqrs. | 1814 Hon. Thomas Ken-
yon |
| 1800 Sir W. W. Wynn | |



ANCIENT CUSTOMS:

Chiefly collected from "Obs. on Pop. Antiq." &c.

SHROVE TUESDAY, commonly called PANCAKE DAY.

THE luxury and intemperance that usually prevailed at this season, were vestiges of the Roman Carnival, which the learned Moresin derives from the times of Gentilism, introducing Joannes Boemus Aubanus as describing it thus: "Men eat and drink and abandon themselves to every kind of sportive foolery, as if resolved to have their fill of pleasure before they were to die." Thus also Seldene "What the Church debars us one day, she gives us leave to take out another." The great bell which used to be rung on this day, to call the people together for the purpose of confessing their sins, was called *Pancake-bell*; a name which it still retains.

SAINT DAVID'S DAY.

The anniversary of this patron saint of Wales has been immemorably celebrated at the Three Tuns, in

Bailey-street. St. David, archbishop of Menevy, now from him called St. David's, in Pembrokeshire, flourished in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian æra, and died at the age of 140. Mr. Walpole informs us, "in the days of King Arthur, St. David won a great victory over the Saxons, having ordered every one of his soldiers to place a Leek in his cap, for the sake of distinction; in memory whereof, the Welsh to this day wear a leek on the first of March."

" I like the Leeke above all herbes and flowers,
When first we wore the same, the field was ours,
The leeke is white and greene, whereby is ment
That Brittaines are both stout and eminent :
Next to the lion and the unicorn
The leeke the fairest emblyn that is worne." *H. MS. 1977.*

However, Owen, in his "Cambrian Biography," says, "the wearing of the leek on St. David's-day, probably originated from the custom of *Cymortha*, or the neighbourly aid practised among farmers, which is of various kinds. In some districts of South Wales, all the neighbours of a small farmer without means, appoint a day, when they all attend to plough his land, and the like; and at such a time it is a custom for each individual to bring his portion of leeks to be used in making pottage for the whole company."

GOOD FRIDAY CROSS BUNS.

Hutchinson derives the Good-Friday Bun from the sacred cakes, which were offered at the Arkite Tem-

ples, stiled *Boun*, and presented every seventh day.—Mr. Bryant has also the following passage on this subject: “The offerings, which people in ancient times, used to present to the gods, were generally purchased at the entrance of the temple; especially every species of consecrated bread, which was denominated accordingly. One species of sacred bread which used to be offered to the gods, was of great antiquity, and called *Boun*.” We have a kind of saffron cake called *Symnels*, mixed with fruit.—The Romans prepared sweet bread for their feasts held at seed time, when they invoked the gods for a prosperous year.

EASTER DAY.

A custom prevailed for the vulgar and uneducated to rise early on this day, and walk into the fields to see the Sun dance; which, as tradition asserts, it always does on this day. Whether such motion there was in that day wherein Christ arised, Scripture hath not revealed, which hath been punctual in other records concerning solary miracles. If metaphorical expressions go so far, we may be bold to affirm, not only that one Sun danced, but Two arose that day: that light appeared at his nativity, and darkness at his death; and a light at both, for even that darkness was a light unto the Gentiles, illuminated by that obscurity.

Great Cakes were formerly divided in the church on Easter-day, among the young people; but being looked upon as a superstitious relique, it was ordered by parliament, in 1645, that the parishioners should forbear that custom, and instead thereof, buy loaves of bread for the poor of the parish with the money that should have bought the cakes.

		s.	d.
1584.—	Itm. payd for synginge cake	-	- ij vj
1588.—	Itm. pd. John Slater his wif, and another made, for vij burthen more	-	- ... viij
	Itm. pd. for singinge bread one Easter-day, and the weeke before for two thousand	-	- ij iiij
	Itm. Devided on Easter-even	-	- ... viij

Osmestry Church-wardens' Books.

Easter has ever been considered by the Church as a season of great festivity. By the law concerning holidays, made in the time of Alfred the Great, it was appointed that the week after Easter should be for ever kept holy. *Heaving* at this season, was originally intended to represent our Saviour's Resurrection. On Easter Monday parties of the male tribe go into every house into which they can get admission; force every female to be seated in a chair, and lift them up or turn them around several times, with loud huzzas. For this, they claim a fee and chaste salute. On the Tuesday, the females claim the same privilege, and pursue their business in the same manner.

ALL FOOLS' DAY.

A custom, says the *Spectator*, prevails everywhere among us on the first of April, when everybody strives to make as many fools as he can. The wit chiefly consists in sending persons on what are called *speechless errands*, for the history of Eve's mother, for pigeon's milk, with similar ridiculous absurdities. A writer in the *Gent. Mag.* July, 1783, conjectures, that "the custom of imposing upon and ridiculing people on the first of April, may have allusion to the mockery of the Saviour of the world by the Jews. Something like this, which we call making *April fools*, is practised also abroad in Roman Catholic countries on Innocents'-day; on which occasion, people run through all the rooms, making a pretended search in and under the beds, in memory, I believe, of the search made by Herod for the discovery and destruction of the child, Jesus, and his having been imposed upon and deceived by the Wise Men, who, contrary to his orders and expectations, 'returned to their own country another way.'"

MAY DAY.

It is usual to decorate the doors and windows of our houses on the first of May. There was a time when this custom was observed by noble and royal personages as well as the vulgar. Thus we read in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that early on May day, "forth goth alost and lest, to fetch the flouris fresh,

and braunch, and blome." Hawthorn, or, as it is called *May*; placed at the doors upon this day, may point out the first fruits of the Spring, as this is one of the earliest trees which blossoms.

BANNERING, OR PERAMBULATING BOUNDARIES.

"That ev'ry man might keep his own possession
Our fathers us'd, in reverent procession,
(With zealous prayers, and with praisefull cheere)
To walke their parish-limit once a yeare;
And well-known markes (which sacrilegious hands
Now cut or break) so border'd out their lands,
That every one distinctly knew his owne;
And many brawles, now rife, were then unknowne."

It was a general custom formerly, says Bourne, and is still observed in some country parishes, to go round the bounds and limits of the parish, on one of the three days before Holy-Thursday, or the feast of our Lord's Ascension, when the minister, accompanied by his churchwardens and parishioners, were wont to deprecate the vengeance of God, beg a blessing on the fruits of the earth, and preserve the rights and properties of the parish. This custom is called *Bannering* from the banners and badges of the cross. This practice had been discontinued in this town for several years, but is now renewed, and the *liberties* are perambulated in the month of October.

1610.—"Itm. bestowed in charges upon Sr. John and his s. d.
company in the Rogacion wick, by consent of
some of the gent. of the parishe - - - ii vj

Itm. Haue geuen to a preacher that preached upon *s. d.*
 Assention day, by consent to pay for his dinner ... xij
 1743.—Paid for Bannering, by Mr. Vicar's orders - 2 0"
Omo. W. B.

" 1670.—Spent at the perambulation dinner £3 10 0
 Given to the boys that were whipt 0 4 0"
Wardens' Accounts of Chelsea.

The last entry alludes to an expedient for impressing the recollection of particular boundaries on the minds of the young people. Something to the same effect was usually done here.

This custom is probably derived from the Heathen, in imitation of their feast called Terminalia, which was dedicated to the god Terminus, whom they considered as the guardian of fields and land-marks, and keeper up of friendship among men.

ROYAL OAK DAY.

On the twenty-ninth of May, the anniversary of the Restoration of Charles II. it is customary for the common people to wear in their hats the leaves of the oak, and to deck their doors and windows with the boughs of that tree. This is done in commemoration of the marvellous escape of that monarch from those that were in pursuit of him, who passed under the very oak tree in which he had secreted himself after the fatal battle of Worcester.

WELLS—TRINITY SUNDAY.

In the Papal times there was a custom in this country, if a well had an awful situation, if its waters were

bright and clear, or if it was considered as having a medicinal quality, to dedicate it to some saint, by honouring it with his name. In some parts of England, particularly this neighbourhood, it has been a custom from time immemorial, for the lads and lasses to collect together at springs or fountains, on Trinity Sunday; to drink *sugar and water*, where the lasses give the treat. They afterwards adjourn to the public-house, and the lads return the compliment in cakes, ale, &c. Grose speaks of a well dedicated to St. Oswald, where the neighbours have an opinion, that a shirt or shift taken of a sick person, and thrown into that well, will shew whether the person will recover or die: for if it floated, it denoted the recovery of the party; if it sunk, there remained no hope of their life: and to reward the saint for his intelligence, they tear off a rag of the shirt and leave it hanging on the briars thereabouts.

OSWESTRY SHOW—CORPUS CHRISTI DAY:

(Thursday after Trinity Sunday.)

The incorporated companies of this town formerly went in procession through the principal streets, on this day; each fraternity having a king, music, with flags, and other devices, emblematical of its calling.

This was termed *Oswestry Show*, and probably originated in the procession, on Corpus Christi Day, to the monastery of St. Oswald. In Roman Catholic countries, it is customary for the companies to unite

in celebration of Corpus Christi Day, that is the feast of the Holy Sacrament or Body of our Lord. It is one of the most splendid festivals of the Roman church, as their grand anniversary.

“ Then dothe ensue the solemne feaste of Corpus Christi day,
 Who then can shew their wicked use, and fond and foolish play;
 The hallowed bread, with worship great, in silver pix they beare
 About the church, or in the citie, passing heare and theare;
 His armes that beares the same, two of the welthiest men do holde,
 And over him a canopy of silke and cloth of gold:
 Foure others use to beare aloufe, least that some filthie thing [fling.
 Should fall from hie, or some mad birde her dounge thereon should
 Christe's passion here derided is, with sundrie maskes and playes;
 Fair Ursley with hir mayden all, dothe pass amid the wayes.

* * * * *

The challis and the singinge cake with Barbara is led,
 And sundrie other pageants playde, in worshipec of this bred,
 That please the foolish people well: what should I stand upon
 Their banners, crosses, candlestickes, and reliques, many on,
 Their cuppes, and carved images, that priestes with count'nance hie
 Or rude and common people beare about full solemlic?

* * * * *

The common wayes with bowes are strawde, and every streete beside,
 And to the walles and windowes all, are bowes and braunches tide.
 The monkes in every place do roame, the nonnes abroad are sent;
 The priestes and schoolmen lowd do rore, some use the instrument.
 The straunger passage through the streete, upon his knees do fall;
 And earnestly upon this bread, as on his God, doth call.

* * * * *

A number great of armed men here all this while do stande,
 To looke that no disorder be, nor any filching hand;
 For all the church-goods out are brought, which certainly would bee
 A booty good, if every man might have his libertie.”

* * * * *

We have trespassed on the patience of the reader, by giving this extract from "Obs. on Pop. Antiq." v. i. p. 236; and according to this authority, the gaudy procession of Oswestry Show took its rise from this Roman Catholic festival: but it has also been considered as originally an ancient British festival, which is not improbable.

FAIRS.

Bailey tells us, that in ancient times, amongst Christians, upon any extraordinary solemnity, particularly the anniversary dedication of a church, the tradesmen used to bring and sell their wares even in the churchyards; but riots and disturbances often happening, by reason of the numbers assembled together, privileges were granted by royal charter to particular places, towns, and places of strength, where magistrates presided, to keep the people in order. In the 7th of queen Eliz. it was enjoined, "that in all faires and common markets, falling *uppon the Sunday*, there be no shewing of any wares before the service be done."

s. d.

1599.—" Payd to foure men a dayes wages, in keepinge the
market upon the fayre daye out of the church yeard ij ..
Paid oue August fayer and Sant Andres fayer, for to
kepe oute the markt - - - .. xij
1602. Itm. pd. to a felowe for keepinge the church yard
upon the faier day, from seling and buinge of skynes
and sheep - - - - - .. vj"

Ans. Wardens' B.

OSWESTRY WAKE—FEAST-OF DEDICATION.

(*Assumption of the Virgin Mary, 15th of August.*)

As in the times of Paganism, annual festivals were celebrated in honour and memory of their gods, goddesses, and heroes, when the people resorted together at their temples and tombs; and as the Jews constantly kept their anniversary feast of dedication, in remembrance of Judas Maccabæus their deliverer; so it hath been an ancient custom among the Christians of this island, to keep a feast every year upon a certain week or day, in remembrance of the finishing of their parish church, and of the first solemn dedicating of it to the service of God, and committing it to the protection of some guardian saint or angel.— This feast was at first regularly kept on that day in every week on which the church was dedicated; but great irregularities and licentiousness having crept into these festivities by degrees, an act of convocation, passed by Henry VIII. lessened their number. The feast of the dedication of every church was ordered to be kept upon one and the same day, everywhere; that is, upon the first Sunday in October; and the the Saint's-day to which the church was dedicated, entirely laid aside. This act is now disregarded; but probably it arose from thence, that the feast of Wakes was first put off till the Sunday following the proper day, that the people might not have too many avocations from their necessary and domestic business.

MICHAELMAS.

It has long been, and still continues the custom at this time of the year, or thereabouts, to elect the governors of towns and cities, the civil guardians of the peace of men; perhaps, as Bourne supposes, because the feast of angels naturally enough brings to our minds the old opinion of tutelar saints or spirits, who have, or are thought to have, the particular charge of certain bodies of men, or districts of country; as also that every man has his guardian angel, who attends him from the cradle to the grave, from the moment of his coming in, to his going out of life.

Michaelmas Goose.—There is an old custom still in use, of having a roast goose on Michaelmas day. Mr. Douce says, “that queen Elizabeth received the news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, whilst she was eating a goose on Michaelmas day, and that in commemoration of that event, she ever afterwards on that day dined on a goose.”

EVE OF ALL SAINTS:

Vulgarly called Hallow-e'en, and Nut-crack Night.

All Saints is on the first of November, on the eve of which, it is customary with young people to dive for apples, or catch at them when suspended, and that with their mouths only, their hands being tied behind their backs. Nuts, apples, and cards, com-

pose the entertainment, and from the custom of flinging nuts into the fire, or cracking them with their teeth, it has doubtless had its name of *Nut-crack Night*. The *lighting of fires* on the eve of All Saints, scarcely needs explaining: fire being, even among the Pagans an emblem of immortality, and well calculated to typify the ascent of the soul to Heaven.

An ingenious author gives us the principal charms and spells of this night. Pulling stalks of corn; eating the apple at the glass; sowing hemp seed by maidens, and they believe that if they look back, they will see the apparition of the man for their future spouse: they hang a smock before the fire, on the close of the feast, and sit up all night, concealed in a corner of the room, convinced that his apparition will come down the chimney, and turn the smock. These, and many other superstitious ceremonies, the remains of Druidism, are observed on this holiday, which will never be eradicated while the name of Hallow Eve is permitted to remain.

GUNPOWDER PLOT.

On the Fifth of November it was customary for the boys to dress up an image of the infamous conspirator, Guy Fawkes, holding in one hand a dark lanthorn, and in the other, a bundle of matches, and to carry it about the streets. In the evening, bonfires were made, and these frightful figures burnt in the

midst of them. This conspiracy was for the purpose of blowing up James I. and his parliament, but the plot was happily discovered, and many of its leaders executed.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas day, in the primitive church, was always observed as the Sabbath-day, and, like that, preceded by an eve or vigil. Hence our present Christmas eve. On the night of this eve, our ancestors were wont to light up candles of an uncommon size, and lay a log of wood upon the fire called a *Yule-clog*, or Christmas block to illuminate the house, and, as it were, turn night into day.

It is customary in Oswestry to usher in the morning of Christmas day with

“th’ accustomed sounds
Of wakeful Waits, whose melody (compos’d
Of hautboy, organ, violin, and flute,
And various other instruments of mirth)
Is meant to celebrate the coming time.”

Bishop Taylor observes, that the “Gloria in Excelsis,” the well-known hymn sung by the angels to the shepherds at our Lord’s nativity, was the earliest carol. The bishops, in the earlier ages of the church, were accustomed to sing carols among their clergy.

The bestowing of *Christmas Boxes* is one of those absurd customs of antiquity, which, till within these

few years, had spread itself almost into a national grievance. The Romish priests had masses said for almost everything: if a ship went out to the Indies, the priests had a box in her, under the protection of some saint: and for masses, as their cant was, to be said to that saint, &c. the poor people must put something into the priests' box, which was not opened till the ship's return. The mass at that time was called Christ-mass, and the box called Christmass box, or money gathered against that time, that masses might be made, by the priests to the saints, to forgive people the debauchery of that time: and from this, servants had the liberty to get box money, that they too might be enabled to pay the priest for his masses, knowing well the truth of the proverb, "No penny, no paternosters."

The custom of decking churches, houses, &c. with *Evergreens* at Christmas, the Christians seem to have copied from their Pagan ancestors. Although Gay mentions the *Mistletoe* among those evergreens put up in churches, it never entered those sacred edifices, but by mistake, or ignorance of the sextons; for it was the heathenish and profane plant, as having been of such distinction in the Pagan rites of Druidism, and it had its place assigned it in kitchens, where it was hung up in great state with its white berries, and whatever female chanced to stand under it, the young man there present had a right, or claimed one, of saluting her, and of plucking off and presenting her with a berry at each kiss.

This was one of the most respectable festivals of our Druids, called *Yule-tide*: when mistletoe, which they called *All-heal*, was carried in their hands and laid on their altars, as an emblem of the salutiferous advent of the Messiah. This mistletoe they cut off the trees with their upright hatchets of brass, called Celts, put upon the ends of their staffs, which they carried in their hands.

PUBLISHING OF BANNS.

From among the numerous items of the kind, the following is extracted from the parish register of Oswestry: "Sept. 1654. Thomas Evance, of the parish of Kinnerley, and Margaret Williams, of the same, were published three markt days in Oswestry markt, beginning the 4th daye, and had their certificate the 13th day, and were married the 19th November." This was in the time of Cromwell's usurpation.



NEIGHBOURHOOD.

ASTON HALL, the seat of William Lloyd, esq. 2 miles distant from Oswestry, on the right of the road leading to Shrewsbury. *Aston Chapel* was built in 1594, at the expence of Richard Lloyd, esq. of Aston, and then called Christ's Chapel, in the consecration.

Broomhall, the seat of H. P. Tozer Aubrey, esq. on the west of the town.

Brynkinallt, about 1 mile from the village of Chirk, the ancient and beautiful seat of the Trevors, descendants of Tudor Trevor. It was the seat of the elder branch of that family in the reign of Henry VI. and descended to sir John Trevor, master of the rolls, and speaker of the house of commons, in the reigns of Jas. II. and William. Sir John was great uncle to the grandfather of the present possessor, the lord viscount Dungannon. Part of the house, as it now stands, was built by Inigo Jones ; but considerable alterations and

additions of late years have been made to it. It is commandingly situated on the brow of a well-wooded hill, at the foot of which flows the Ceiriog; and the views from every part of the grounds, are extremely diversified and fine. The alterations about the house and grounds, are made with great taste, and afford one of the very few instances in which Art has been employed with complete success in aid of Nature.

Brynygwalia, the seat of John Bonnor, esq. distant 7 miles, on the road leading to Llanrhaiadr.

Cernybwch, a hill situated about two miles west of the town. The races are held on its summit in the month of September, under the auspices of that highly-respected man, sir W. W. Wynn, bart. A writer observes, that "there is, at this period, an opposition of charms: the English and the Cambrian *beauties* endeavour to *shine down* each other, but we never could determine which gained the victory."

The village of *Chirk*, distant $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles, is situated on the brow of a hill: and from the numerous coal works and other undertakings in the neighbourhood, is a place of some business. The Ellesmere canal passes within $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile of the village, and is carried over the river and vale of Ceiriog by a long aqueduct. In the church at Chirk, there are several monuments of the Middletons of Chirk castle. *Chirk castle* is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the village. This, like that of Powis, still

retains a mixture of the castle and mansion. It stands in an open situation, on the summit of a considerable eminence, and commands an extensive view into seventeen different counties. On the exterior it retains much of its primitive aspect. It is a quadrangular structure, having five towers, one at each corner, and the fifth for the gateway in front. The entrance is into a spacious court yard, a hundred and sixty feet long, and a hundred broad; and on the east side this, there is a handsome colonnade. The principal apartments consist of a saloon, a drawing room, and gallery; in the latter of which, there is a large collection of paintings, consisting, however, almost entirely of family portraits. The present structure was the work of Roger Mortimer, the son of Roger, baron of Wigmore, and founded on the site of a very ancient fortress called Castell Crogen. It became the property of sir Thomas Middleton, knight, in 1595, in whose family it still continues.—*Bingley*.

Glamrafon, a new stone house, the seat of Lawton Parry, esq. 7 m. distant, on the road to Llanrhaiadr.

Halston, the seat of Mrs. Mytton, lies within a mile on the east side of Whittington. It is called in ancient deeds *Haly Stone* or *Holy Stone*. Near it stood the abbey, taken down above a century ago. That it had been a sanctuary is evident. Meyric Lloyd, lord of some part of Uwch Ales, in the reign of Richard I. would not yield subjection to the English government,

under which the hundred of Dyffryn Clwyd, and several others were then; and having taken some English officers that came there to execute the law, killed several of them. For this fact, he forfeited his lands to the king; fled, and took sanctuary at Halston, where he was taken to the protection of its possessor, John Fitzalan, earl of Arundel. In the Saxon era, the lordship of Halston belonged to Edric; at which time there were on it two Welshmen and one Frenchman. After the Norman Conquest, Halston became the property of an earl of Arundel, and was given by that family to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.—In the 26th of Henry VIII. the commandry was valued at £160. 14s. 10d. a year. Upon the abolition of many of the military religious orders, Henry VIII. empowered John Sewster, esq. to dispose of this manor to Alan Horde, who made an exchange with Edward Mytton, esq. of Habberly; which alienation was afterwards confirmed by queen Elizabeth. The church or chapel of Halston, is a donative, without any other revenue than what the chaplain is allowed by the owner, and is of exempt jurisdiction. Halston was the birth-place of the famous general Mytton; of whom, particulars are given in another part of this work.

Hardwick, the seat of John Kynaston Powell, esq. M. P. and high steward of this borough, 7 miles distant, on the left of the road leading to Ellesmere.

Llanfarda, the seat of Henry Watkin Williams Wynn, esq. $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile west of the town. John Davies, esq. recorder, 1635, in his MS. "Observations," says, "Rynerus, bishop of St. Asaph, suppressed the old church of the Mercians, called *Llanvorda*."

Llangedain, the seat of Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, esq. M. P. and recorder of this borough, 8 miles distant, on the road to Llanrhaidr.

Llanymynech, (or *-neich*) signifies *the Church District of the Monks*, and has no relation whatever to *mines*. It was so called, there having formerly been a monastery there. This village is about 6 miles distant, on the road leading to Pool. The Romans had mine-works in Llanymynech hill, from which they obtained considerable quantities of copper. One vestige of their work appears in an artificial cave, of immense length, called *Ogo*, (more properly *Ogof*, which is a Welsh word signifying *a Cave*.) The windings of this cavern are numerous and intricate. Some years ago, two men endeavouring to explore it, were so bewildered in its turnings, that they were found prostrate on the ground, by some men sent in search of them, despairing of ever seeing the light again. Skeletons, culinary utensils, &c. have been discovered in this cavern. One of the skeletons had a battle-axe by its side, and a bracelet of glass beads around its wrist. Several Roman coins of Antoninus, Faustina, and others have also been found in this place; and not long ago many coins, mostly of

Constantine, were found in a parcel of earth which was washed down the side of the hill. The hill abounds in lime-stone. Great numbers of men are employed in raising, breaking, and burning the stone.

Llynklys, or *Llyncklys*, signifying *the sunk Palace*, is a farm-house, distant 2 miles, on the Llanymynech road. The *Lake* or pool is a short distance from the house. Such is the superstition of many in the neighbourhood, that they actually believe the towers, &c. of the palace are to be seen at a great depth, when the water is calm!—*The reader is referred to the legendary ballad of "Lluncklys" in the poems of John F. M. Dovaston, esq.*

Morton Chapel, in the parish of Llanyblodwell, was built and endowed by Mrs. Bridgman, 1744: value £47.—Incumbents: William Dalton, A. M. fellow of Cath. hall, Cambridge; Mr. Williams succeeded, and resigned for the rectory of Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog; Mr. Venables, rector of Erbistock, 1783; who resigned to his nephew, Jos. Venables, 1797.—*MS. belonging to John Bonnor, esq.*

Mount Sion, the residence of the late Mrs. Edwards, distant about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, on the road to Sella-tyn. See 73.

Nursery, West-Felton, the pleasant retreat of John F. M. Dovaston, esq. 4 miles distant.

Parkhall, an old timber house near the road leading

to Whittington. There is a small domestic chapel at this place, but no service is at present performed there. Notice is taken of it in the register of Whittington, in the year 1592. It has been said, that Parkball and Aston chapels were both consecrated by Archbishop Parker.

Pentrepant, the property of G. H. Warrington Carew, esq. of Crewcombe Court, Somersetshire, is the residence of Launcelot Shentone, esq. It is about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile on the road leading to Sellatyn. Pentrepant descended to Mr. Carew from his mother, which estate had remained in Hanmer family for many generations. John Hanmer, bishop of St. Asaph, resided here. He died in 1629, aged 56, and was buried in the parish church of Sellatyn; to the poor of which place, and also of Oswestry and St. Asaph, he gave £15. to be equally divided between them. On the north side of the communion table an inscription on a brass plate preserves his memory.

Plasnewydd, the charming retreat of the hon. lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, is situated about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile south of Llangollen. Lady Eleanor Butler was, I am informed, the youngest sister of the late, and consequently aunt to the present earl of Ormond. Miss Ponsonby is the grand-daughter of the late general Ponsonby, who was slain in the battle of Fontenoy. Her father, Mr. Chambre Ponsonby, married Miss Louisa Lyons, a most elegant and accomplished wo-

man, the second daughter of capt. John Lyons, clerk of the council in Dublin. This lady lived but a few years after their marriage, and left the present Miss Ponsonby.—These two females, delighted with the scenery around Llangollen, when it was little known to the rest of the world, sought here a philosophical retirement from the frivolities of fashionable life, erected a dwelling that commands a fine mountain prospect, and have resided here ever since.—*Bingley.*

Pontcysyllty Aqueduct. This stupendous work is seen to the right of the road leading to Llangollen, and is distant from Oswestry about 8 miles. The following inscription, which is placed on one of the columns will sufficiently point out the nature of the work :

The Nobility and Gentry of
the adjacent counties
having united their efforts with
the great commercial interest of this country,
in treating an intercourse and union between
England and North Wales,
By a navigable communication of the three rivers,
Severn, Dee, and Mersey,
for the mutual benefit of agriculture and trade,
caused the first stone of this aqueduct of
Pont Cysyllty,
to be laid, on the 25th day of July, 1795,
when Richard Middleton of Chirk, esquire, M. P.
one of the original patrons of the
Ellesmere Canal,
was Lord of this manor,
and in the reign of our sovereign
George the Third,
when the equity of the laws and
the security of property,
promoted the general welfare of the nation,
while the arts and sciences flourished
by his patronage, and
the conduct of civil life was improved
by his example

The navigation over this aqueduct was opened 29th of November, 1805. The iron work is 1007 feet long; height from the surface of the river to the top of the iron rails, 145 feet; the embankment on the south side 1503 feet long. There are 18 stone pillars, besides abutments. A fine view of this aqueduct is publishing by subscription, by Mr. G. Yates, of Oswestry.

Porkington, the seat of W. Ormsby Gore, esq. is about 1 mile west of the town. This place takes its name from a singular entrenchment in a neighbouring field, called Castell Brogynton, a fort belonging to Owen Brogynton, a natural son to Owen Madoc ap Meredydd, prince of Powis Vadog. It is of a circular form, surrounded with a vast earthen dike, and a deep foss. It appears, by an old drawing in Mr. Mytton's collection, to have had two entrances, pretty close to each other, projecting a little from the sides and diverging; the end of each guarded by a semi-lunar curtain. These are now destroyed. The whole parish consists of a single township, which also bears the same title with the mansion. The name of the house was soon altered into one very near resembling the present. In 1218, Henry III. in an address to Llewelyn, prince of Wales, informs him, that among others, Bledodyn Filius Oeni de *Porkinton* had performed to his majesty the service he owed. I must now make a very long transition from this period, to that which produced another distinguished personage of this family. Here

is preserved the portrait of sir John Owen, knight, of Clenency, in Caernarvonshire; a gallant officer and strenuous supporter of the cause of Charles I. He greatly signalized himself at the siege of Bristol, when it was taken by prince Rupert, and was desperately wounded in the attack. Congenial qualities recommended him to his highness; who, superseding the appointment of archbp. Williams to the government of Conway castle, in 1645, constituted sir John commander in his place. This fortress was soon given up to general Mytton, by the contrivance of the prelate, and the power of his friends: and the knight retired to his seat in the distant parts of the county. In 1648, he rose in arms to make a last effort in behalf of his fallen master, probably in concert with the royalists in Kent and Essex. He was soon attacked by William Lloyd, sheriff of the shire, whom he defeated, wounded, and made prisoner. He then laid siege to Caernarvon; but hearing that some of the parliament forces under colonels Carter and Twisleton, were on their march to attack him, he hastened to meet them, and took the sheriff with him on a litter. He met with his enemies near Llandegai: a furious action ensued, in which at first sir John had the advantage; but falling in with the reserve, fortune turned against him: in a personal contest with a captain Taylor, he was pulled off his horse, and made prisoner; and his troops, disheartened by the loss of their commander, took to flight. The messenger who brought the news of this

victory to the parliament, received a reward of £200. out of sir John's estate. Sir John was conveyed to Windsor castle, where he found four noblemen under confinement for the same cause. Nov. 10th, a vote passed for his banishment, and that of the four lords, and major-gen. Langhern; but after the execution of their royal master, sanguinary measures took place.—The duke of Hamilton, the earl of Holland, and lords Goring and Capel, were put upon their trials. Sir John shewed a spirit worthy of his country. He told his judges, that “he was a plain gentleman of Wales, who had been always taught to obey the king; that he had served him honestly during the war; and finding many honest men endeavoured to raise forces, whereby they might get him out of prison, he did the like;” and concluded like a man who did not care what they resolved concerning him. In the end he was condemned to lose his head; for which, with a humorous intrepidity, he made the court a low reverence, and gave his humble thanks. A by-stander asking him what he meant, he replied aloud, “It was a great honour to a poor gentleman of Wales to lose his head with such noble lords; for by G—, he was afraid they would have hanged him.” Sir John, by mere good fortune, was disappointed of the honour he was flattered with; being, as his epitaph says, *Famæ plus quam vitæ sollicito*. He neither solicited for a pardon, nor was any petition made to parliament in his favour; which was strongly importuned in behalf

of his fellow prisoners. Ireton proved his advocate, and told the house, "That there was one person for whom no one spoke a word; and therefore requested, that he might be saved by the sole motive and goodness of the house." In consequence, mercy was extended to him; and after a few months imprisonment, he was set at liberty. He retired again into his country, where he died in 1666; and was interred in the church of Penmorva, Caernarvonshire, where there is a small monument, with a latin epitaph, to his memory. *Pen.*

Pradoe, the seat of the hon. Thomas Kenyon, (brother to lord Kenyon) 6 miles distant, on the left of the Shrewsbury road.

Swanhill, (belonging to John Wynn Eyton, esq. of Leesewood) the residence of Mrs. Lloyd, relict of Rob. Lloyd, esq. is $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from the town on the right of the road leading to the race-ground. The house is in the parishes of Oswestry and Sellatyn.

Sweeney Mountain, 2 miles distant, on the right of the road to Pool, noted for its quarries of free-stone.

Sweeney Hall, the seat of T. N. Parker, esq. distant $1\frac{1}{4}$ m. on the left of the road to Pool, was built a few years ago, on the site of an old mansion-house, near to which are the vestiges of a burial ground; adopted as such, in the turbulent period of the Commonwealth. The following inscriptions are still legible:

“ Here lieth Mrs. Abigail Chetwood, daughter to Sir Richard Chetwood, who died the first of May, 1658.”

“ Thomas Baker, Esq. deceased March 19, aged 68, anno dom. 1675.”

The above Thomas Baker served the office of high sheriff for the county, A. D. 1649, the first year of Oliver Cromwell's usurpation; and in the parliament of 1653, he was summoned by Cromwell, with John Browne of Little Ness, as knights of the shire.

The above Thomas Baker dying without issue, A. D. 1675, his property descended to his niece, Mary, the wife of Thomas Browne, of Little Ness, esq. (son of the above John Browne) and in succession, to Sarah, the wife of T. N. Parker, esq.

Whittington, a populous village, situated upon the turnpike road leading from the town of Oswestry to Ellesmere; being better than 2 miles from the former, and 5 from the latter town. The ancient mode of spelling it in the first page of the old register, bearing date 1591, is *Whittentonne*. The present name takes place in 1602. In old deeds it is wrote *Vica Alba*; and in the Welsh tongue, *Drewen*, i. e. *White Town*. It may not be an improbable conjecture, that the name is derived from the appearance of the buildings: the church (rebuilt, since this account was written) and old houses being plastered with a white coat; or from the castle, which was called the *White Castle*, as Powis

was called the *Red Castle*. This parish is divided into nine townships: Whittington, to the south; Berghill and Franeton, to the east; Old Martin, Hindford, Henlle, and Ebnal, to the north; and Fernhill and Daywell, to the west.

The lordship or manor of Whittington comprehends the parishes of Whittington and Sellatyn. Before the Conquest, it belonged to Tudor Trevor, earl of Hereford, and continued in the male line until it came to Melch, daughter and heiress of sir William Peverel; which sir William was the seventh degree from Tudor Trevor. Melch married Geron or Gweren de Metts, (about 1083) lord of Alberbury, son to sir Foulk de Warren, and had issue, Foulk Fitz Warren, lord of Whittington, famous for his various adventures and exploits in war. It is remarked of him, that playing at chess with king John, the monarch broke his head with the chess-board; but Foulk returned the blow, and almost demolished the king. He was owner of the castle situated in Whittington; the gateway of which, is still habitable. The ruins of four regular bastions appear, with the remains of old fosses and distant out-works. The castle has been moated round, and was entered over a draw-bridge. In a room over the gateway was the figure of a knight on horseback, *daubed* on the wall, and underneath, the following lines:

This was Sir Foulk Fitz Warren, late a great and valiant knight,
Who kept the Britons still in awe, and oft' times put to flight.

He of this castle owner was, and held it by command
Of Henry, late surnam'd the third, and king of all this land.
His grandfather, a Lorrainer, by fame was much befriended,
Who Peverley's daughter took to wife, from whom this Foulk des-
His ancient feats of chivalry in annals are recorded; [cended.
Our king of England afterwards him baron made, and lorded.

The Fitz Warrens were barons of the realm by the title of Fitz Warrens of Whittington; which honour, by a female, descended through the Hawkfords to the Bouchiers, earls of Bath, and is now (1780) in abeyance in the female heiresses of that family.

The manor, together with the advowsons of the rectories of Whittington and Sellatyn, the mansion house and estate of Fernhill, in this parish, were purchased from Henry, last earl of Arundel of the name of Fitzalan, by Francis Albany, esq. of London. The manor, advowsons, and Fernhill estate passed to the House of Aston, by the marriage of Sarah, sole heiress of the said Francis Albany, esq. to Thomas Lloyd, esq. of Aston. On the opposite side of the chancel (alluding to the old church) is the following inscription on a marble tablet: "Sarah, the only daughter and heir of Francis Albany, esq. lord of the manor of Whittington and wife of Thomas Lloyd, esq. of Aston, was here interred, Sept. 24th, 1693, aged 67."

The steward of the manor holds annually a court leet and court baron in the castle, to which the several inhabitants owe suit and service, and fined one penny

for non-attendance. Chief rents are likewise payable to the Lord ; and a heriot of the best beast from every freehold within the manor, at the death of the person seized.—From *MS. "Materials" of the late Rev. W. Roberts, Rector of Whittington and Sellatyn.*

Woodhill, the seat of Mrs. Venables, relict of Lazarus Venables, esq. 2 miles distant, on the right of the road to Llanymynech.

Woodhouse, the seat of William Owen, esq. 5 miles distant, on the left of the road to Shrewsbury.

Wynnstay, the seat of sir Watkin Williams Wynn, bart. 11 miles distant, on the right of the road to Wrexham. The grounds extend to the village of Rhuabon ; they are well wooded, and about eight miles in circumference. From the ancient rampart called Wat's Dyke, which passes through the grounds, this place was called *Wattstay* : but, on the marriage of sir John Wynne with Jane, the daughter of Eyton Evans, and heiress of this property, he changed its name to *Wynnstay*. It was anciently the property and residence of Madoc ap Griffith Maelor, the potent lord of Bromfield, and founder of Valle Crucis abbey, near Llangollen.

END.





